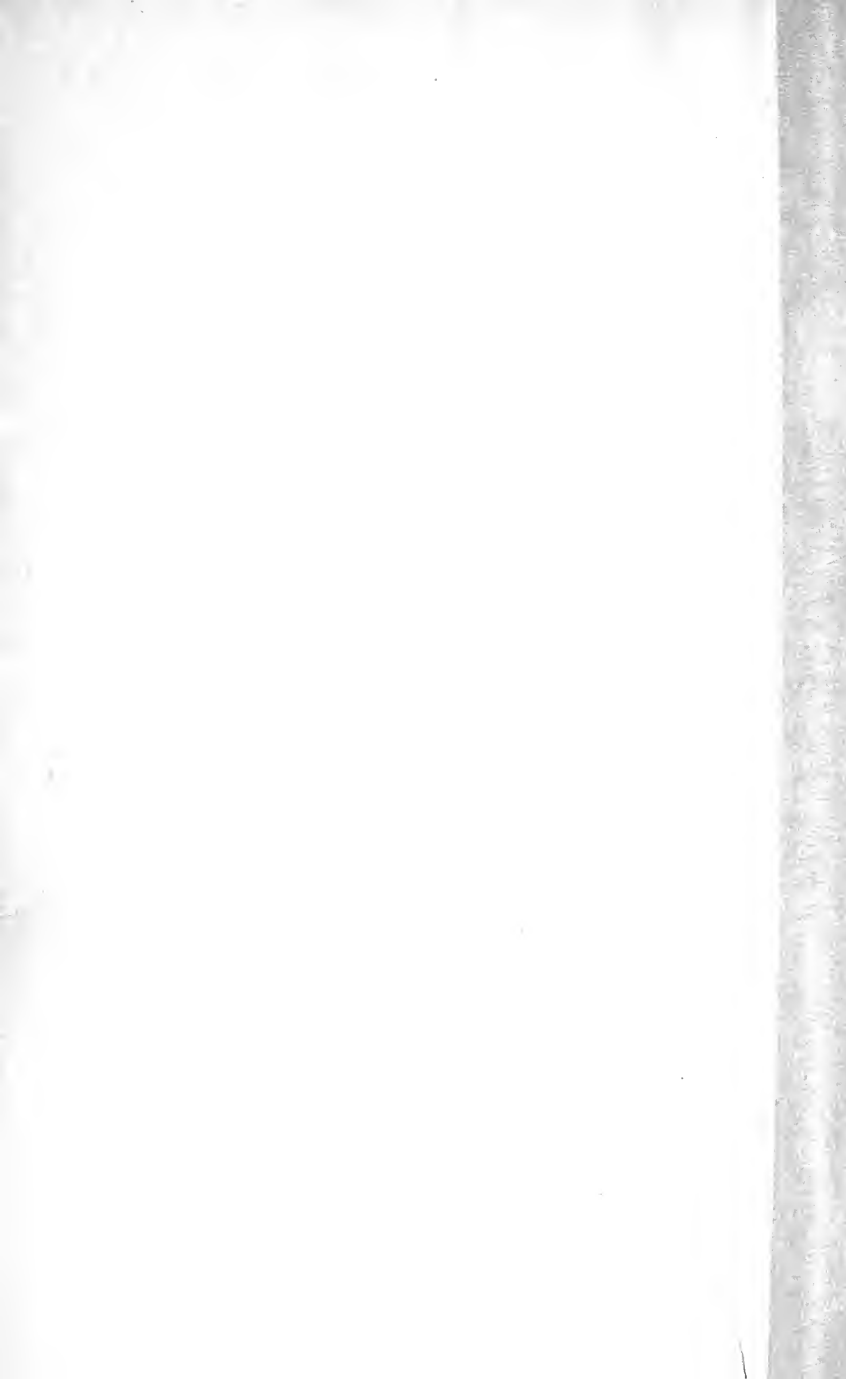


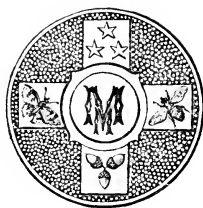
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ON FAMILY WORSHIP.



DIALOGUES

BETWEEN A CLERGYMAN AND A LAYMAN

ON FAMILY WORSHIP.

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BY

FREDERICK DENISON MAURICE, M.A.

INCUMBENT OF ST PETER'S, ST MARYLEBONE.

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P R E F A C E.

I HAVE often tried to find or frame a Manual of Prayers for my own Family. I have always failed. Some correspondents stated to me, very strongly, their need of such a Manual, and begged that I would make an effort to supply it.

I resolved, during this autumn, earnestly to consider what had been my own obstacles in performing that which some may think the easiest and most obvious of all duties. I might then understand better what were the obstacles of which so many Clergymen and Laymen complained. I soon found that the subject of Family Worship was interwoven with all the habits, all the theology of our day. I could not think of it to any practical purpose without thinking of them.

I cannot say how much of terror, how much of consolation, I derived from this discovery. I felt that we Clergymen might by our false representations of the Gospel with which we were entrusted, be undermining the domestic life of our land. I learnt that every Layman, whatever his present confusions or scepticism, has in his domestic life a clue to the mysteries of the Gospel, as they are set forth in the history of the Bible, in the direct language of the Creeds, of which our teaching cannot deprive him. Theology and Family Life are so closely linked together by God, that men cannot put them asunder. They must fall together ; they may rise together.

Whether the Clergy or the Laity are to be the main agents in the Moral and Spiritual Reformation which I believe God intends for us, I know not. But, I am sure that each will help the other best, and help the land best, when they frankly express to each other what they need, when they frankly confess how they have erred. The parties in these Dialogues are a Clergyman who accepts the doctrines of the Church and a Layman whose faith in them is nearly gone.

But they are not triumphant exposures of the Layman's infidelity or of the Clergyman's security. The Clergyman owns the Layman's infidelity to be in himself. He tries to show that he possesses no security which is not also a security for his friend. The object of the Dialogues is not confutation, but the discovery of a ground on which two Englishmen and two Fathers may stand, and on which their country and their children may stand when their places know them no more.

I may endeavour, hereafter, in a book of Family Devotions, to apply the method which I have pointed out in the Eleventh Dialogue. At all events, I may have given wiser and better men a hint of which they can avail themselves.

F. D. MAURICE.

LONDON, *November*, 1862.



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CONTENTS.

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CONTENTS.

DIALOGUE I.

	PAGE
A LAYMAN'S PERPLEXITIES	3

DIALOGUE II.

A MOTHER'S FAITH	17
----------------------------	----

DIALOGUE III.

MALE CALVINISM	29
--------------------------	----

DIALOGUE IV.

THE REGENERATE AND THE UNREGENERATE	49
---	----

DIALOGUE V.

THE NATURAL AND THE SUPERNATURAL	67
--	----

DIALOGUE VI.

THE REVELATION TO THE FAMILY OF ABRAHAM	83
---	----

DIALOGUE VII.

THE FATHER AND THE SON	99
----------------------------------	----

DIALOGUE VIII.

	PAGE
REPENTANCE AND CONVERSION	117

DIALOGUE IX.

FATHERS IN GOD	135
--------------------------	-----

DIALOGUE X.

HEATHEN AND CHRISTIAN DEVOTION	157
--	-----

DIALOGUE XI.

THE METHOD OF PRAYER	179
--------------------------------	-----

DIALOGUE XII.

THE SOUL AND THE SPIRIT	201
-----------------------------------	-----

DIALOGUE I.



DIALOGUE I.

A LAYMAN'S PERPLEXITIES.

Layman. That detestable white neckcloth! How I should like now and then, just for an half-hour, to meet you and speak with you, as we met and spoke in old times!

Clergyman. Worse than detestable—diabolical white neckcloth if it divides friends and destroys honest intercourse.

Layman. It does; you know it does. We are not Ned and Tom as we once were, but Layman and Priest. If you wore a stiff coat collar and an M. B. waistcoat I should not care. They give one a fair notice not to approach too near. They even provoke one, from pure wilfulness, to break through the fence. I have done so once or twice, and have found an actual creature of flesh and blood behind. But one of you Centaurs...

Clergyman. I understand you ; half pedant half animal. Certainly a poor substitute for the spirit and body which constitute what we call a man ; or even for the genuine creatures which Rosa Bonheur and Landseer love to paint. Well ! let that stand for a sketch of my class ; somewhat a caricature I would hope, but useful as a warning. The exception you make on behalf of some of my High Church brethren is honourable to them and well deserved. They often shew more sympathy with their kind, more appreciation of human strength, more sympathy with human weakness, than we who rather affect likeness to our neighbours than separation from them.

Layman. Whether it be so or not, there are many, especially in the higher classes, who infinitely prefer them to such as you, because they can as readily and with as little fear tell their complaints to the Confessor *pur et simple* as to any physician of the body. What their prescriptions are, how many they kill or cure or leave as they were, my experience is not sufficient to warrant me in expressing an opinion.

Clergyman. I believe you are right. Many Ladies and Gentlemen desire that the Clergy shall form a caste standing aloof as far as may be from the habits and temptations of the other castes into which fashion divides society. Those Clergymen

who value the compliment should accept the position which it assigns them unflinchingly. I believe it is a bad compliment and a false position.

Layman. Your ambition is more modest. A wife to shew that you can be as comfortable as other people, a white neckcloth to shew that you are not altogether as they are; these together mark the standard at which the history and traditions of the English Church teach her Clergy that they should aim.

Clergyman. The relief from the restraint on marriage may be taken as a mere licence to enjoy ourselves. It may have a worse effect still. It may make us feeble and cowardly in our work, eager for preferments, afraid to offend the tastes and opinions of the age. We have all felt these temptations. Which of us has not yielded to them? And which of us has not been reminded that his domestic life, if he had used it rightly, if he had not utterly perverted it from its right use, would have laid obligations upon him which no cloister life ever can lay upon him; would have given him a sense of his connection with his time and country and with the ages past which we have no business to demand of those who have not the ties of hearth and home; would have interpreted the Theology which he professes to believe and teach as nothing else can interpret it.

Layman. His Theology? That always seems

to me the barrier which separates the Clergyman from his kith and kin, which makes it unrighteous in him to meddle with human interests and sympathies. I do indeed meet with men of your profession, very agreeable and intelligent they are, in whose company one forgets the white neckcloth altogether. They are athletic men, scholars, artists, men of science; they take pains to shew how strong their lay interests are, how free they are from any clerical pedantry. I like them for a few hours' conversation, but when I ask myself afterwards why they were ordained, why they should be Clergymen at all, I am puzzled for an answer.

Clergyman. I have none of those gifts which the divines to whom you allude possess. If I had, I should think that my ordination bound me to cultivate them and turn them to the best account; I should repent of neglecting any one of them, or turning it to a selfish account. Not pretending to these, I acknowledge the ordinary bonds which connect me with all who are sons and husbands and fathers in the land. I repent of having violated my ordination vows by not more continually remembering these bonds; for instance, by not being more of a kinsman to you.

Layman. Certainly it has seemed to me that your theology put us at a great distance from each other.

Clergyman. Not my theology; but that which is always striving against it in my mind, my selfishness and my unbelief.

Layman. Unbelief could hardly divide us; except indeed that if you have any tendency to it, you may be afraid that it should be deepened and expanded by that which is so much more fixed and habitual in me.

Clergyman. I am far more afraid that my unbelief, the insincerity of my profession, should hurt you, than that you should hurt me. You can tell me nothing against yourself which I could not match by something of my own, the same in kind, worse in degree. You could tell me nothing which would not assure me that there is a faith in you as well as in me, struggling with that unbelief, grasping at the very theology which you suppose condemns you and sets me at war with you.

Layman. Does not your theology condemn me? Does it not set me at war with you?

Clergyman. It condemns that in you and in me which keeps us apart. It condemns that which rends asunder what is human from what is divine.

Layman. This is some new theology of yours, adapted to the nineteenth century, eliminating from the documents which have descended from other centuries, and which you with your lips confess, all that is disagreeable to our tastes and habits.

Clergyman. It is the theology of those Creeds which have descended to us from other centuries, the theology that the Father of All sent His Son, the perfect Image of His glory, to take upon Him the nature of man, to bear the sorrows of man, to die the death of man, to conquer the enemies of man, to ascend on high as the Representative of man on the right hand of God, to be the Judge of quick and dead, to deliver the earth from all that has oppressed and degraded it. The theology I mean is that which teaches that there is a Spirit proceeding from this Father and Son, who binds together a whole family in Heaven and earth, who enables men here upon earth to struggle against the selfish influences which are destroying the peace of the earth and of every family upon it, who carries divine forgiveness into the hearts of men, fighting against the unforgivingness of their hearts, who promises to deliver their bodies from corruption and death, who enables them to partake of an everlasting life.

Layman. That is the theology which I find so hard to believe.

Clergyman. And I too. So I said to you when I affirmed that there was no unbelief in your mind that had not what answered to it in mine.

Layman. This Creed seems to me very remote from the habits and notions of our time.

Clergyman. Very remote. The habits and no-

tions of our time, those into which you and I naturally fall, though they may assume a different shape from our different circumstances, sever, it seems to me, Divinity from Humanity, and so ruin both; sever the life of the Church from the life of the family, and so ruin both. I see no hope for a reformation of our age but in their reconciliation.

Layman. There you touch a very tender point in my mind. A few minutes ago I could not have made the confession which your late words have given me courage to make. Few men of my own class and temper would understand it. Many of them go to Church for decency's sake. But the thought of family worship never enters into their minds. I have for a good while given up frequenting the Church. Partly, no doubt, the sermons drove me away. I found in them pretentious and artificial exhortations to simple belief, solemn proclamations of good news, which I was to be destroyed for ever if I did not receive. But I would have borne these—it would have been but a thirty or forty minutes' infliction once a week, if I could have joined in the prayers. These became to me more and more a mockery. I asked without expecting an answer. I appeared to myself to be insulting the Majesty of Heaven, and practising a lie upon my fellow-creatures as well as upon my own conscience. It could not be right. I tried the Meeting-house. At first

I fancied the extempore prayers were more genuine. Then I discovered the secret of their genuineness to be, that they were addressed chiefly to a visible congregation, only now and then to an invisible Being. Still, strange as it may appear, I have not been able to give up the habit of calling my children and servants together for some fashion of domestic worship, if I dare give it the name. The practice was taught me by my Mother. She prized it intensely, and commended it to me as the witness that we were a family, as the great means of keeping us at one. Her words have had a power over me which I have been unable to shake off. The act has associations and memories with it which it is an agony to part with. Yet I must do it. There is a dishonesty in the practice which cannot be good for me or for my children. Truth must be purchased at any price.

Clergyman. Surely the God of Truth has taught you that lesson! Cleave to it, and you will not go far wrong. I should rather say, you must be led right.

Layman. But have you the slightest conception of the state of mind which I have described to you?

Clergyman. Conceptions of states of mind are not worth much. If I did not feel daily what the peril is of becoming an utter hypocrite in all worship, but especially in family worship; if I did not

feel what a death has crept over that more than perhaps over any other, and through that over all others, I should not venture to speak with you upon the subject. That experience and that conviction make the confession which you almost feared to utter in my ears, the greatest point of sympathy which there could be between us.

Layman. I am afraid the sympathy would disappear if we looked more deeply into this question, if you knew all the difficulties which start up before me when I consider it.

Clergyman. Tell me one of them.

Layman. The greatest of all perhaps is this. Reverence for my mother is one of the chief motives, as I have told you, which holds me to this practice. That same reverence makes me feel that I am almost a knave whenever I engage in it.

Clergyman. If it is not too painful to you, explain this contradiction a little more fully.

Layman. She told me that only a child of God could pray to God.

Clergyman. Was she not right? Are we not taught when we pray to say, *Our Father?*

Layman. She taught me to say that prayer.

Clergyman. I am sure she did. And she would never have done so if she had not believed that you had a right to say it.

Layman. Yet she did not regard me as a child

of God. She made me understand that she did not. She certainly would not think me more so, if she knew what I am now.

Clergyman. Perhaps she does know, and may see some things more clearly than when she was visibly present with you.

Layman. I cannot tell how that may be. But she must have been right in saying that God is a Spirit, and that a man without spiritual apprehensions is incapable of drawing near to the Father of Spirits.

Clergyman. Quite right, I think.

Layman. Then you would cut me off from the right of praying as much as she would.

Clergyman. I must cut off myself if I cut off you. I am sure your mother was right in all her *principles*. I am sure she was right in her *practice* of teaching you to say the Lord's Prayer.

Layman. But how could the principles and the practice be reconciled?

Clergyman. About that point she did not perhaps trouble herself. Like a good true woman, she obeyed what she felt to be the command of Christ. She did her duty, whether she could explain it according to her maxims or not. She believed the reconciliation would come to her and to you when it was wanted. I am satisfied that her faith in this matter did not deceive her.

Layman. But I cannot bear this inconsistency in my reason, if her sound heart ever so much enabled her to bear it.

Clergyman. I am sure you cannot; I cannot; no male creature can. Therefore I wish that we might look it steadily in the face together and see whether we cannot work our way through it.

Layman. Will that inquiry involve any diminution in my confidence that my mother was right, if you or I should be ever so wrong?

Clergyman. It will shew us how right she was, perhaps also how wrong we have both been. What you tell me of her will teach me to understand the principles which I profess better, and may help each of us to make our practice more like hers.

Layman. If there is any hope of that result, I am willing that we should examine the subject together. But you give up the neckcloth! I think you are a little ashamed of it.

Clergyman. No: I should be glad to part with any customary and recognized badge of my calling if I thought that the calling was what separated me from you or from any human being. But since I believe it is my forgetfulness of my calling—my indifference to its true signification—which has made me pedantical, or narrow, or heartless, whatever sign, be it ever so trivial, recalls it to me may be of value. It may be bad for Englishmen to see men

continually whose costume suggests the notion of a special, artificial, professional morality. It may be good for Englishmen to be confronted with even a costume which denotes a class that is a lie if it exists for itself, if it is not the common bond of all classes. While I have grave complaints to make against our age, I will not attract its notice and increase its frivolity by any deviation from its indifferent practices and ordinary expectations. I will hope nothing for myself or for it, from a change in external symbols when we are needing an inward renovation.

DIALOGUE II.

DIALOGUE II.

A MOTHER'S FAITH.

Layman. I suspect that I know what will be your solution of the difficulty which was started in our last conversation. I warn you beforehand that it cannot satisfy me. I know my mother's mind too well to believe that it would even have satisfied her.

Clergyman. What solution do you mean?

Layman. You spoke of taking refuge in the theology of other days from notions that are prevalent in our time. The theology of other days would pronounce any baptized person to be a child of God. You would comfort me with the assurance that I earned the privilege in my unconscious infancy. Many of my early lessons may have been forgotten. *This* has stamped itself deeply on my memory and on my conscience: "My dearest boy," so my mother used to say to me, "never imagine that a few drops

of water can change our natures. To be a son of God is not a fiction but the most real thing in the world. I am sure of that. Do not trust any one who tells you the contrary." You say that a man's reason demands something more than a woman's heart. It certainly will not be content with less. The verdict of the woman's heart is attested by my most mature judgment.

Clergyman. I should be much grieved if you ever lost the impression of those memorable words. The more you ponder them the more important they will seem to you.

Layman. It is not then in this merely technical, ecclesiastical, sense that you would induce me to claim the title which you say can only justify me in using the Lord's Prayer.

Clergyman. I abhor all technical, ecclesiastical senses. Again and again I would say with your mother, "We want realities; let us have no fictions."

Layman. Then you do not adopt the expression in our baptismal service, "Seeing now, dearly beloved, that this infant is regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's Church," or those in the Catechism, which are grounded on the same assumption, "My godfathers and godmothers gave me my name in my Baptism wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven."

Clergyman. I repeat these words in the Baptistal Service continually. I hope I do not utter them in the presence of God without meaning them. I teach these words of the Catechism continually. I hope I am not wilfully or carelessly deceiving the children who repeat them to me.

Layman. You take them then in some sense different from the obvious one?

Clergyman. I have said that I abhor all technical, ecclesiastical senses. If I did not think that the child *was* regenerate in the fullest and deepest intention of the words, I would not affirm that it was. If I did not think the child *was* a child of God in that true sense which authorised it to call God its Father, I would not tell it that that was the signification of its Christian name.

Layman. These opinions may be reconcilable in your clerical intellect. They are mere riddles to an unbeliever like me. They would have been equally riddles to my mother, who was a devout Calvinist.

Clergyman. The first article in the faith of a devout Calvinist is that every good thing comes to men from the grace of God, that no good thing whatever originates in the nature of man apart from God.

Layman. My mother subscribed that article *ex animo*.

Clergyman. I knew she did. Therefore she

attributed her faith that she was a child of God to His grace.

Layman. I have no doubt of that.

Clergyman. And she would have been horrified at the thought that the grace of God led her to believe that which was not true.

Layman. It was to her the most precious of all truths.

Clergyman. God, she said, was her Father; therefore she might believe Him to be her Father.

Layman. No one but a Clergyman could suppose the possibility of belief on any other terms.

Clergyman. A just reproof. In other words she would have said, 'God has revealed Himself to me as my Father; therefore I may believe that He is.'

Layman. To her, not to me. Whatever warrant she had for assuming the existence of such a revelation in her own case, she never supposed that I partook of it. She hoped and prayed, no doubt earnestly, I fear very ineffectually, that it might come to me in some after day.

Clergyman. She was a Calvinist, you said, not a Mystic; I use the words because I know you must have heard her use them.

Layman. She had a dread of mystics, though she told me that some of their writings had a great charm for her.

Clergyman. Why did she dread them?

Layman. I will quote you her own expressions, from a letter of hers to one of her religious friends. "Beautiful as portions of this book are, it seems to me to put our inward feelings and experiences in the place of Christ and His Sacrifice."

Clergyman. That I was sure would be her objection to them. It is clear then that however vivid might be her experience of the fact that she was a regenerate person and a child of God, she did not rest her faith upon that experience. Acts which she could not limit to herself, acts which could be recorded in a book, acts which she wished all people to be acquainted with, were what she appealed to. No temptation could induce her to exalt what had passed in her mind to a level with these acts.

Layman. No doubt she rested much on what she described as the testimonies of the written word. Yet she said also that the mere letter of that word was not sufficient to quicken or enlighten any one.

Clergyman. Certainly she would feel that; she was sure that an actual living God was speaking to her out of the Scriptures; she never could put the mere letters of them in place of Him.

Layman. I never knew any person who had that conviction so strongly. It was to me most wonderful, sometimes most enviable. The men and women in the book were living persons to her. *That* I could

in some measure understand. There is no reason why Moses should not be as real a man to her as Pericles or Marcus Aurelius is to me. But it seemed as if she derived her sense of their reality from her belief in the Divine presence with him and with her. She could interpret what was said to him because she took it as addressed to herself.

Clergyman. You describe to me just the person I supposed her to be. And this God she thought had claimed her as His own offspring?

Layman. That was her word. "Do not," she said, "confound a *creature* with a *child*. We are all creatures of God. To be His children is something altogether different."

Clergyman. She did not think that any beast or bird could ever be a child of God?

Layman. Certainly not.

Clergyman. She did not think that any man or woman or child was in its true state unless it were a child of God?

Layman. All her zeal for the conversion of the heathen and for my conversion was grounded upon the conviction that men must be miserable, miserable for ever, unless they become so.

Clergyman. Her wish for you and the heathen was that you should be acquainted with the Gospel of Christ, that you should receive it as a Gospel to yourselves? Am I wrong?

Layman. That was her wish assuredly. The hardness of men in not receiving it was what she complained of.

Clergyman. Her own assurance of being a child of God rested upon that Gospel of Christ?

Layman. I see what you are driving at. You wish to prove that Christ brought some general message to men about a merciful Father in Heaven, and that that was what gave her comfort. It was no such thing. If she dreaded the Mystics, she dreaded the Unitarians much more. That general notion of a Father she said sounded very plausible to those who had not felt the burden of their own sins. To her it was utterly cold and dreary.

Clergyman. To me also.

Layman. If she could not look upon Christ, she said, as an actual Mediator between God and man because He had the nature of both God and man, she could not call God her Father; she could not tell what the name signified. If He were not her reconciled Father in Christ, she should fly from Him instead of seeking Him.

Clergyman. Every word you say confirms what I had imagined before, and increases my sympathy with her. This, then, was the Gospel which she wished you and the heathen to receive.

Layman. What Gospel?

Clergyman. That the Son of God, being one

with the Father, took upon Him the nature of man, and that in Him God has reconciled Do you remember how the words stand?

Layman. I believe they are "the world to Himself." I am not sure whether my mother took those words quite literally.

Clergyman. My impression, from what you have told me, is that she did; more literally than she knew herself or than you suspected. She believed herself to be a child of God on the ground of that revelation in Christ. She wished you to believe it. She wished the heathens to believe it. To believe what?

Layman. It would seem, to believe that we are the children of God in Christ. Yet I know she did not think that. It was incompatible with her most cherished opinions.

Clergyman. We have seen already that her cherished opinions did not hinder her from teaching you the Lord's Prayer. There was something deeper in her, depend upon it, than any opinions. Her faith rose far above them, went far beneath them.

Layman. Still she said constantly that Adam had sinned; that we were all children of Adam; that no child of Adam, as such, had any good thing in him.

Clergyman. She said that of herself, did she not, as much as of you or of any heathen?

Layman. More, much more. It was no form of words when she confessed herself to be a sinner; she *believed* herself to be one. The only hope, she said, was that Christ died for sinners. She could look up to God in Him, and ask Him to deliver her from her sins.

Clergyman. And do you not think that she would have wished you and every heathen to do the same?

Layman. I am sure she would.

Clergyman. Though you are children of Adam, and though in yourselves dwells no good thing?

Layman. Yes.

Clergyman. Then do you think I must necessarily be at war with your mother's deepest and truest convictions when I say that I claim a right to call God my Father in Christ, not only *though* I feel all kinds of evil and unbelief in me, but even *because* I feel them; my reluctance to call Him my Father being my resistance to the Gospel of Christ, being that which I am to ask God's help to struggle against? And if I say this for myself, can I help saying it for you? Upon what possible principle which your mother confessed, or which I confess, could I assert the right for myself and not for you?

Layman. I think you have made out some case for my mother. I think you have justified *her* for teaching me the Lord's Prayer. I thank you for *

that. I do not see that you have justified your own use of the words in the Baptismal Service and in the Catechism. These I must still regard as equivocations on her shewing and on yours.

Clergyman. I believe it is much more important for your sake that I should defend her consistency than my own. In fact my consistency is of little consequence. I shall be very glad that you should expose my inconsistency if you can.

Layman. When we meet next I will do my best.

Clergyman. Perhaps I may put in some further words on the subject of Calvinism before we enter upon that subject. It has a masculine side as well as a feminine side. There is a worth in it which you and I ought to understand even better than she did.

DIALOGUE III.

DIALOGUE III.

MALE CALVINISM.

Layman. You spoke of a Calvinism, different from my mother's, with which you appeared to have some sympathy, nay, which you hinted had something in it that attracted you as a man more than hers.

Clergyman. I did not use the word "attracted;" that would have been very ill chosen.

Layman. Particularly ill chosen, in my opinion. Her Calvinism came to me sweetened by her personal gracefulness, by her deep charity and great humility. That of her teachers repelled me by its ruggedness, its cruelty, and its arrogance.

Clergyman. You would not apply those epithets to the Calvinism of Coligny, of William the Silent, even of John Bunyan.

Layman. Perhaps not. I speak of that with

which I have come personally into contact; amongst preachers especially.

Clergyman. But that which produced such mighty effects in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—effects upon the life of nations, nay, upon the whole of Christendom—must have had a power in it which we cannot ignore.

Layman. As a fact of history, certainly not. But is it not extinct for our time?

Clergyman. We cannot afford that it should be extinct. Its carcase would breed the deadliest Atheism the world has ever known.

Layman. How do you distinguish this Calvinism from my mother's?

Clergyman. You have explained very clearly what my meaning is. There was in her a womanly up-looking faith and trust which *presumed* a Being who had called it forth. The distinct *assertion* of such a Being first as dwelling in His own Absolute-ness, then as the Will to which men must refer *their* state, is the pure, original, *male*, Calvinism.

Layman. That is what you consider to have been the strength of the Huguenots, of the deliverers of the United Provinces, of the Scotch Covenanters, of the English Puritans, of the New England Settlers?

Clergyman. Precisely. There was doubtless a feminine element in their faith, as there must be in

everything which is human, and which works upon men. But no one would deny that the opposite element was predominant, that this was held in entire subjection, was sometimes almost extinguished.

Layman. You describe what was called 'The Religion' in those days, the antagonist power to the Church?

Clergyman. No name was ever more unfortunately selected, unless it were the opposite one when it represented the Jesuit power or the Catholic League.

Layman. Why do you say so?

Clergyman. Religion being an unscriptural name—one borrowed from the Heathen world—was eminently inappropriate to men who derived all their armoury from Scripture, who considered their battle as one of the true God with false gods. Religion being a human act—an act of dependance or affiance upon some God or gods—was a most unfitting name to denote those who took the will of God as their starting point, and made that the foundation of all the acts and hopes of men. The Calvinists were not fighting for a religion, but for their belief that God was calling a living Church out of that which they pronounced to be an apostate and diabolical Church.

Layman. You do not seem to allow that their

opponents were fighting even for that apostate and diabolical Church?

Clergyman. I think they were doing their best to justify those epithets by putting forth an Order and a League as if they represented the ancient Christendom—by practically admitting that they did not stand upon the calling and election of God, but upon the devices of men.

Layman. Are we not wandering from our subject into a merely historical discussion?

Clergyman. Not if I am right in thinking that the old Calvinism—the Calvinism which preaches of an Absolute Being—the Calvinism which preaches of a Will that is the one ground of life and freedom to human wills—is wanted for our days more than for any previous day; that it must take a stronger and loftier, not a feebler and more compromising form in our day than in any previous days. It may be that this nomenclature about a Religion which was comparatively harmless when men were in the stir and agony of a national conflict—when God was indeed a living God to them—is now helping much to confound Him with the notions of our intellect about Him, with the feelings of our hearts towards Him, and so is making the special witness to which I allude ineffectual.

Layman. A stranger Calvinism than we have

had, yet, in this day or in any former day? Merciful Heaven! to what are we coming?

Clergyman. Left to ourselves we shall drift into the worship of the Devil; therefore into greater hatred of each other and alienation from all who have gone before us. Under God's guidance we may be brought to a deeper knowledge of Him and so into a fellowship with each other and sympathy with the men of other days such as there has never been. The alternative is; the hearts of the fathers will be turned to the children and of the children to the fathers, or the earth will be smitten with a curse.

Layman. Calvinism seems to me charged with curses against the earth and all that dwell in it. And yet my mother was a Calvinist. In what contradictions we are dwelling!

Clergyman. Let us try to find our way out of them. What strikes you as so fearful in Calvinism?

Layman. That thought of an Omnipotent Will bent upon the destruction—pledged by its very nature, and what is called its justice, to the destruction—of ninety-nine hundredths of all the Wills that it has called into existence.

Clergyman. Do you think your mother believed in such a Will?

Layman. I cannot tell; I dare not ask myself.

Clergyman. You had much better ask yourself.

I will give you the answer. She believed in a Will that is exactly the contrary of this. She believed in a Will to save men out of destruction.

Layman. To save some men out of destruction.

Clergyman. To save *all* men out of destruction. Why else did she think of sending a Gospel to Heathens? Did not she say it was God's Gospel, the Gospel of His Will?

Layman. Yes! but there were a hundred qualifications. They must believe; they must be new creatures.

Clergyman. Yet she told you it was a Gospel without conditions.

Layman. Continually; I needed do no good works to entitle me to the salvation. I was only to believe myself a sinner.

Clergyman. And that belief was God's gift?

Layman. She said so.

Clergyman. Proceeding from His good Will towards sinful men?

Layman. She said so. And yet there was also a dark black ground. She did not like to speak of it much; even, I suspect, to think of it. She preferred to talk to me of Christ, and how He cared for outcasts. But the black ground was then for *me* to think of. *I* must face it though she did not.

Clergyman. That was what I meant when I said that there were inconsistencies which a man

could not endure, though a woman might; eternal principles which a man must encounter, that he might preserve the woman's faith from perishing. That was also what I meant when I said that a dreadful alternative was presented to the men of this age which they cannot evade, though their fathers might, and which they must not evade, that they may do justice to their fathers.

Layman. State it more distinctly.

Clergyman. Is there a Will at the foundation of the Universe and of my being which is a Will to good and only to good, a Will to save and only to save? Or is the Will which is at the foundation of the Universe one primarily and generally to destroy; only as the rare exception to save; one which if it has encountered evil has been vanquished by the evil? This is the alternative. It is set before us all, clergymen and laymen, men, women and children. We have all doubled in a thousand ways to escape from it. Orthodox and liberals, whatever we call ourselves, we have our own tricks for avoiding it, our own formulas by which we seek to hide it from others and from ourselves. But they will not avail. God is tearing them in pieces. The secularism of our time, if we will understand it rightly, says this: "We think you mean that there is at the root of
"all things a Will to destroy us. Such a Will we
"are determined not to acknowledge. We will con-

“fess ourselves to be no better than animals, mere creatures of a day, rather than acknowledge it. “But if not *that* Will, what Will do you set before us? If your Christianity does not signify this, “what does it signify?”

Layman. That seems to me a hazardous way of stating the case. It may appeal to male instincts rather than female; but I believe that most of the male teachers in all the sects and churches of Christendom would feel that it put their Creeds in jeopardy.

Clergyman. So far from thinking that it puts these Creeds in jeopardy, I am sure that if they have courage to grapple with this awful problem, the Creed of Christendom will come forth with a literal force, with a mighty evidence, of which our dallying and cowardice have deprived it. I am sure that the Calvinist and the Catholic will then begin, for the first time, to understand one another; that the meaning of the Reformation will stand out in all its power; that the Romanists, who have resisted the Reformation, will perceive for what truth they have been bearing witness, and will be enabled in very deed to bear witness of it. And that family life of which we are speaking...

Layman. Not so fast. I am very anxious to know how what you are saying bears upon that topic; but you have thrown out so many splendid

promises concerning the Church and the Universe generally, that I must stop you to look for a moment into the import of them. Calvinists you say and Catholics may come to understand one another, if once this Will to save is recognised by both. Were not Calvinists the great protestants against the old Church on this ground, that it consisted of the regenerate and the unregenerate mixed, that such a society was a world and not a Church, that it was God's pleasure to save His elect out of this mass, and to build up a Church composed of them?

Clergyman. You describe the movement truly. And, so describing it, you say that the Calvinists spoke of God as a Saviour or Deliverer.

Layman. Certainly a Saviour and Deliverer of those who are fortunate enough to be saved or delivered.

Clergyman. But these, they said, were the only persons who knew what the counsels of God were. *They* experienced His deliverance, *they* were sure that He did not wish them to be given up to the baseness, covetousness, lust which they saw about them; they said that the God whom they read of in the Scriptures hated these evils and delivered His servants out of them.

Layman. His servants: yes.

Clergyman. And as you know very well, resting on the authority of these same Scriptures, they

spoke of God as the chooser and Deliverer of nations. The Covenanter was to stand up for Scotland as a chosen nation. The soldier of the Prince of Orange looked upon Holland as an elect nation.

Layman. You touch upon the curious inconsistency in which these Protestants involved themselves. Reformed Scotland, reformed Holland, even reformed Geneva, was as much composed of evil men mixed with good as the old Romish countries had been. The lay leaders must have been aware, the preachers must have been aware, that the unconverted, in their sense of the word, formed by the very nature of things a chief part of these elect nations.

Clergyman. That which was no contradiction to them at all while they really entered into the meaning of the *Old Testament* and drew their precedents from it, did become a contradiction through a notion which was in their minds that the *New Testament* demanded a stricter separation, a narrower and closer circle than the old. So that the Church of the nation became a perpetual puzzle. It could not mean the Clergy; yet it was always on the point of meaning them. It could not mean merely the religious people of the land; for how was their existence to be ascertained by any national census? Therefore sects rose up to represent the religious part of the nation, to be its Church.

The regenerate and the unregenerate were still mixed; the sects must grow to be smaller and smaller. Did the smallest of all represent the universal Church? Or did the collection of warring schools, sects, denominations, represent it?

Layman. Difficult questions to answer certainly. Not less difficult, I should say, in England than elsewhere.

Clergyman. Impossible to answer in England or anywhere, I should say, if we are not willing steadily to examine facts of history and the facts of our own experience.

Layman. History would seem to shew that the sects you have just described were the natural development of that protest which we have been used to call the Reformation, and which you connect so closely with the Calvinistical proclamation of a Divine Will. That proclamation, I apprehend, was a denunciation of the old Church as being too comprehensive, as being too much like the great world. What have these sects which you speak of done but continually expand that denunciation? The inconsistency of your own Church (all in different ways feel it and express it) consists in this, that it tries to combine the Calvinistical protest against the mixture of the regenerate and unregenerate, with the Romanist mixture of them in one very heterogeneous society.

Clergyman. Whatever inconsistencies there are in our Church must be burnt out of it. It will not have to pass less through the fire than its neighbours. I suspect it will be in the most scorching part of the fire. But before I speak of it, I wish to ask for a moment whether the Reformation was really a protest against the Christendom of its day for being too comprehensive, or for being too narrow.

Layman. You startle me. Of course in *our* day we denounce Romanists as too narrow. The *Nulla salus extra Ecclesiam* has become one of the watchwords which we most vehemently object against them. But surely in the 16th century the cry would have been, "You reckon all baptized men, at any rate all men who acknowledge the authority of the Latin Bishop, as members of the Church. We say that only a few elect souls, almost entirely among those who reject the authority of the Latin Bishop, have any part or lot in it."

Clergyman. And yet what the Reformers boasted was, that they had a Gospel to all sinners whatsoever. They complained of the old Church for depriving men of that Gospel, for not letting them hear the message of salvation. They said moreover, that this message came straight from God, that the message was concerning His Son, that all were called upon to believe in that Son. They spoke

most vehemently of a finished salvation; not of one which men might have a chance of obtaining, but of one that had been accomplished. Their main charge against the teachers of Christendom was, that they made *that* contingent upon certain acts of men which the Creeds proclaimed as already wrought out for them in Christ. They said therefore that these Christendom teachers with the Pope at their head, were setting at nought their Creeds and defrauding sinful men of the blessings they announced.

Layman. I am aware that the Reformers, Luther especially, appealed continually to the old Creeds as the warrants of the message which they delivered in their sermons. Those Creeds, I imagine, are not as popular with their descendants in this day. The dissenters in England, the advanced protestants in Germany, regard them as out of date, the relics of a foregone world.

Clergyman. Most consistently, I think, if the sect maxim is the Christian maxim, if the Will of God is manifested to men in the selection of a small body out of a race which is doomed to perdition. For the Creeds speak of the Will of the eternal Father as manifested in the Son, begotten before all worlds, Light of Light, very God of very God, who for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven, and was conceived of the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary, and suffered and died,

and was buried, and rose again, and ascended on High. But if the Will of the Father was shewn in these acts of the Son for us men and for our salvation, then I say the old Calvinist had a good right to protest against any churchmen whatever, who being sent to declare that *men* had been thus redeemed by God, had been thus claimed as His children, dared to limit this redemption or salvation by certain ecclesiastical boundaries. He might preach the Gospel of a finished salvation as he boasted of doing.

Layman. Poor Calvinist! You compel him to say just the last thing in the world which he would have wished to say.

Clergyman. No, not the last thing which he would have *wished* to say. The last thing which he thought he might dare to say with the sense which he had of the divine righteousness and of God's abhorrence of all evil. That righteousness he must assert; that evil he must denounce. It is becoming, I think, every day more evident *now* that God's righteousness must be set at nought, that good and evil must be confounded—that evil cannot be looked upon as damnation, unless we can say, without doubt or equivocation, "His will is to make men righteous; His will is to put down evil." Others may stammer at these broad, simple declarations. When the Calvinist stammers at them he sets aside

his own first principle; the eternal truth of which, by all his traditions, he is marked out as the witness. He may adhere to his system—that which makes him an antagonist of the Romanist; the Romanist may adhere to *his* system—that which makes him an antagonist of the Calvinist. But the first is obliged to purchase this advantage by sacrificing the real faith of his forefathers, by qualifying and diluting that faith with maxims borrowed from the Arminian school, by destroying all its vital and practical force. The other is obliged to reduce the Creeds which he repeats, the Creeds of which he boasts that his Church is the guardian, into a nullity. Whereas if each would give up that which is hardest for a party man to give up, that which to a Christian is the most blessed of all sacrifices—his self-exaltation, his cause of quarrel with his brother—the Calvinist would understand why his ancestors lived and died to reform the Church; the Romanist would understand why his ancestors would now admit that his Church was too universal; both would take part in the work of testifying to all the children of men that God has saved them in His Son out of the curse and degradation into which they have fallen through ignorance and disbelief of their high destiny.

Layman. You pointed out one cause of disagreement between these opponents which must, it seems to me, hinder the revival of the faith of either,

and yet must keep them always apart. The Calvinist, you said, was the champion of the National calling of the Old Testament. The Romanist, indifferent to National distinctions, was the champion of the Universal Church, which he supposes to be spoken of in the New Testament. The Old Testament is becoming more and more a dead letter to us; no one connects it now with his own National life. The New Testament is regarded by some parties as a collection of moral precepts, by some as embodying a divine religion. The moment an ecclesiastical significance is given to it, the State feeling, divorced from its Jewish associations but still as alive as ever, puts in its protest. "As much morality or religion as you please, my Christian friends! But no politics. *We* manage them. Keep the Kingdom of Heaven for the future. Let it mean the rewards of obedience hereafter, and let them be tempered in reasonable mixtures with the fears of Hell. But the notion of a Kingdom of Heaven to which we are subject; no! our fathers had enough of that. We have done with it."

Clergyman. There is much truth in your description of the state of feelings in this country and in all the countries of Christendom. Nor do I see that any arguments or discussions about the relations of the State to the Church, though much that is valuable has been said upon that subject in our days

and by various opposing parties, is leading us to a practical result.

Layman. After all you have said to-day, you could hardly exalt a merely individual religion against both Church and State.

Clergyman. Certainly not; though, I believe, more justice will be done to individual religion in the sense in which your mother would have used the words, than has been done to it, or can be done to it, while people have been trying to find a regenerate and an unregenerate *class* instead of each man saying as he ought to say, “*I carry in me all the unregenerate principles that have made the world miserable. I claim to be a child of God, and so to resist the world, the flesh, and the devil.*” But though I say this and feel it deeply, I do not look to individual belief for the reformation of society.

Layman. Where then?

Clergyman. *God said to Abraham, so stands the old record, In thee and in thy seed shall all the FAMILIES of the earth be blessed.* I do think that there may be many like you, who, weary of the Church,—despairing also it may be of efforts for the emancipation of nations,—still cling with wonderful tenacity to the sacredness of the Family; still cannot help associating *that* with something divine. In you and such as you I see men who may be the restorers of our divinity as well as of our civilisation. You may

teach us Clergy again to understand our Bible, to believe in our Creeds.

Layman. A strange vocation for one who understands very little of the one, and believes very little of the other.

DIALOGUE IV.

DIALOGUE IV.

THE REGENERATE AND THE * UNREGENERATE.

Layman. Some words of yours just before we parted last week recall me to the subject of your own inconsistencies as an English clergyman. I must not be put off that scent by your proposal to invest me with honours certainly quite unsought for and unmerited. Before you spoke of family faith and of what I as an infidel might do to restore it, you observed that individual Christianity would gain much if Regeneration were not spoken of as belonging to a class. Now do you not speak of it in your Baptismal service and Catechism as belonging to a class? Are not the regenerate the baptized? Are not the unregenerate the unbaptized?

Clergyman. The baptized include, I conceive, a great many classes whom language and distance

of place keep apart, who are utterly unlike in customs, opinions, government. Among them would be found Greeks, Latins, Armenians; servants of the Pope, protesters against the Pope; Lutherans, Calvinists, Zuinglians; Episcopalians, Presbyterians; Italians, Germans, Spaniards, Americans of the North and Americans of the South.

Layman. A motley gathering, certainly, to make up a Holy Catholic Church!

Clergyman. No doubt. The question is, how you would distinguish them; where you can find some marks which shall serve to shew which form the Church and which are shut out from it. Shall it be a geographical sign? Shall it be difference of speech? Shall it be complexion? Shall it be a certain census of wealth, the payment of rates or taxes perhaps to some sovereign? Shall it be rank?

Layman. Every sect would repudiate these as the notes of a Church. Every one would assert certain opinions, be they what they may, to be essential characteristics of it.

Clergyman. You are right. That is the demand of a Sect. A Church must, I conceive, stand on a different ground.

Layman. On what ground?

Clergyman. On that which our friends the Calvinists were so vehement in declaring to be the only one,

‘The will of God choosing men into His family, calling them to be His sons and daughters.’

Layman. But how is that will made known?

Clergyman. That I could not have guessed. The words, *Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, baptizing them into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost*, guided the Apostles and those who followed them to the knowledge of the sign which was to mark the family. On that command, as I believe, they acted. A Christendom has grown up. You and I have been claimed as portions of it.

Layman. But you say that the Baptism signifies something to you and also to me?

Clergyman. Just so. I say that it signifies to each of us what he is; what God has made him.

Layman. And you believe me to be what my Baptism tells me that I am?

Clergyman. It has been the main object of my conversations to persuade you that you cannot be anything less than what it says you are.

Layman. That is, according to the baptismal service, ‘regenerate;’ and according to the Catechism, ‘a member of Christ, a child of God, an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.’

Clergyman. Even so; and what I intended by the remark which you quoted at the beginning of this dialogue is, that I should be a much better indi-

vidual Christian than I am if I habitually and at every moment remembered that this is my state, and if I habitually and at every moment remembered that I have in myself that which indisposes me to believe in this state and to act as if I were in it; or to use more theological language, all unregenerate tendencies and impulses; all the impulses that belong to me merely as a child of Adam. And I also meant that it hinders me greatly from exercising this recollection and the moral vigilance which would accompany it, to be trying to prove that I am one of a class; and therefore different from other people or better than other people. My baptism ought continually to keep the truth of my own state in my remembrance. It cannot, except by the grossest perversion of its nature and object,—only when different signs of my own contrivance are introduced by the side of it and as the substitute for it—lead me to that pharisaical presumption.

Layman. It does and must lead those who follow the teaching of the Catechism to suppose that they are better than other people.

Clergyman. Why?

Layman. Because they were “made in their baptism members of Christ and children of God.” All who are not baptized—Quakers for instance—are therefore not members of Christ and children of God. Every troublesome school-girl, every baptized crimi-

nal in Newgate, had a right to think herself better than Mrs Fry.

Clergyman. You hold that any one teaching this manual is bound to put that construction upon the words?

Layman. Unless he distorts them from their obvious and natural meaning. You ought to recollect that the document is written for the use of children or of simple teachers of children; that it is short; that it is carefully composed. Would such a word as 'made' have been adopted if it had not been intended that the child and the child's teacher should give it the force I give it?

Clergyman. In a document short, written for a child or a simple teacher of a child and carefully composed, would a writer contradict himself formally and directly within a few paragraphs?

Layman. He may have done so unconsciously in some chance phrase, but these primary words must rule the interpretation of any other.

Clergyman. How if the chance phrase should occur in a careful, deliberate interpretation of the baptismal Creed, which the child's godfather and godmother promised in its name that it should believe?

Layman. That would be puzzling. Tell me what part of this interpretation you refer to.

Clergyman. The child having rehearsed the

Articles of its belief, is asked what it learns from them. The answer is, "First, I learn to believe in God the Father Almighty, who hath made me and all the world. Secondly, In God the Son, who hath redeemed me and all mankind." That is part of the explanation given of the Creed which expresses the meaning and ground of the child's baptism.

Layman. Is there not another part of that explanation?

Clergyman. There is: "Thirdly, In God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me and all the elect people of God."

Layman. There! What does that mean? The troublesome child, the criminal in Newgate, has an assurance that she is one of the elect people of God. What is the assurance? She has been baptized, Mrs Fry has not been baptized.

Clergyman. I said that I believed the whole of Christendom was called or chosen by God to be a witness to mankind of its redemption. Is not that what the Catechism says? You seemed to think that according to our faith *mankind* was doomed to perdition and that the Church was redeemed out of it. Is that the doctrine which is set forth in this Manual for children? Can we hold it while we adhere to the express terms of that Manual?

Layman. But the troublesome child and the criminal in Newgate are to say that God the Holy

Ghost sanctifies them, and that He did not sanctify Mrs Fry the Quaker.

Clergyman. In what copy of the Catechism have you met with that last clause?

Layman. It is implied in the one which I have met with.

Clergyman. I say that it is not only *not* implied in those words, but that any teacher would be guilty of treason against those words if he added this clause to them, if he did not give the child such an interpretation of them as would make your inference from them ridiculous and impossible.

Layman. What can you mean?

Clergyman. I mean that the teacher ought to say this to the child: "My dear child, you are taught "here that God the Holy Ghost is the author of all "good which is in you or in any creature whatsoever "under Heaven. You are taught that He alone "sanctifies people or makes them holy. He will enable you to renounce those works of the devil which "your godfathers and godmothers renounced for you. "They are such works as St Paul describes in the "verses I read to you out of the Epistle to the Galatians—malice, bitterness, uncleanness. He will "enable you to do all the good works, the works "which St Paul speaks of in the same place—meekness, gentleness, loving-kindness. Remember therefore that you are fighting against this Spirit who

“is always with you, when you do any of these
“bad works, when you fail in those good works.
“Remember that this will be so always, all your
“life through. Whatever good works you do will
“be the fruits of God’s Holy Spirit; whatever evil
“works you do will be from resisting God’s Holy
“Spirit. Your Baptism tells you this. Your Bap-
“tism marks you out as chosen and sealed of God
“to carry this witness with you wherever you go.
“And therefore whenever you see a person who shews
“you gentleness and loving-kindness, who calls forth
“gentleness and loving-kindness in you, who resists
“the works of the devil in you, I tell you, the Bible
“tells you, the Church tells you, that you are to
“say, that person is acting under the inspiration of
“God’s Holy Spirit, and cannot be acting by any
“other inspiration than His.”

Layman. But still Mrs Fry was not baptized.

Clergyman. That was her business, not mine. She might think me and all the rest of Christendom utterly unspiritual; I am not bound therefore to think her so.

Layman. But you spoke of Baptism as a sign which God has given to us that we are His witnesses.

Clergyman. Certainly I said so. Not a sign which He has given us that others are *not* His witnesses. The blessing of Baptism is that it refers all to His will and choice, nothing whatever to our

judgment. If I set up my judgment or presume to measure His acts by it, I contradict the witness of my baptism. It is no longer the sign of His purpose; it is merely the badge of my profession.

Layman. Still I must come back to my old text. That word *made* stands written; no logical or rhetorical subtleties can evade the force of it.

Clergyman. I quite agree with you. Logical and rhetorical subtleties are singularly out of place in the interpretation of a manual for little children. But do you think I shall commit the folly and crime of resorting to them, if, having perused the whole document and derived those lessons from the most distinct and authoritative part of it which I have just set forth to you, I resolve that this word *cannot* have a signification which is directly in the teeth of those lessons?

Layman. Provided you can find any other. I do not think you can.

Clergyman. Your mother used to speak to you of a natural birth, and a birth from above?

Layman. Certainly. That distinction was continually present to her mind.

Clergyman. Was it not a true distinction?

Layman. For theologians I suppose yes.

Clergyman. I mean not for theologians. For you and me and every man?

Layman. That is what you have been trying to make out; I suppose you are satisfied with your own success.

Clergyman. I am not the least satisfied unless you have gone along with me. But I am certain that you have. I am certain that you are as conscious of the struggle of a lower nature in you against higher impulses and instincts, as I am.

Layman. That struggle you will find spoken of just as much in heathen books as in Christian.

Clergyman. I am saying so. It belongs to man as man. Some may be more conscious of it than others. Those who have been most conscious of it have been the best and wisest men. But still it is in all.

Layman. Well?

Clergyman. Supposing then there were a revelation of a God who had taken part with these higher instincts and impulses in men, who had Himself inspired them, who had *justified* them, saying, "This higher thing in the man is the true man. This is my child"...

Layman. I grant you the supposition. I do not know whither it is leading us.

Clergyman. Suppose again that He who had given this revelation, had given a sign and pledge that He recognises this in the man as the true man,

that whatever is fighting against this He regards as the man's enemy and as His enemy.

Layman. This may or may not be the explanation of the worth of Baptism; but we are talking about that special word in the Catechism, *made*.

Clergyman. If there is this distinction and if Baptism involves this distinction, may it not be of very great importance to signify in the strongest manner possible, that the child is not a member of Christ and a child of God in virtue of its natural birth, that God has *made* it what it is by another operation, by another kind of birth? May it not be exceedingly difficult to guard by *any* form of speech against two opposite dangers: the first, of losing sight of this distinction and merging the spiritual in the natural birth; the second, of diminishing the universality of the blessing and confining it to certain persons? There have been times when I have felt the last danger much more than the first; when I have feared so much to narrow the Redemption of Mankind, that I have used language which might easily convey the impression that men as natural creatures were sons of God. Then I have tried to find a more comprehensive phrase than the one of the Catechism, and have secretly or openly murmured against that. But the greatness of my own mistake has been brought home to me by some strong inward experience. I have felt that I was

not really more universal, but was cheating men of a conviction which is of the most radical and universal kind, cheating them also of the message of God which has met that conviction. Then I have come back to this word *made*, and while fully admitting how open it is to misapprehension, have been led to doubt whether I could invent any other, which would not be open to much greater misapprehension. Therefore, leaving my brethren to take what liberties they think justifiable with the language of this document, all the liberty I ask for myself is, that I may give it that sense which is most in accordance with the intention of the writer, as indicated and expressed by himself in other passages of his own composition.

Layman. Let this be as it may. There is another difficulty in which you have become involved by the tone you have taken in our conversation. How you can extricate yourself from that I do not see. You have said, that the natural birth and the spiritual birth are to be carefully distinguished, that Baptism is the great support of this distinction. And yet you have spoken of the family as—I do not know how to express it properly—a sort of ecclesiastical or divine institution. Surely Baptism puts a kind of contempt upon the human family. You, M. or N., are the child of certain parents upon earth. That is your natural state. That belongs to you as

a descendant from Adam. Your Christian name tells you of a different parentage and a different family. Can any child help making this reflection; or if the child does not, must not the man make it? "These family bonds and attachments, do they not belong to the natural earthly condition out of which I have been raised? Would it not be a very high perfection if I could strictly follow the command of hating father and mother for the sake of Christ? If I cannot attain that height, may I not make some approximation towards it? Must not my Christian or baptized life be all throughout antagonistic to this life of child and parent, of brother and sister?"

Clergyman. You think you see tokens in history that that has been the feeling of religious people in different ages?

Layman. What else means all the history of Monkhood and Nunhood in the east and the west? What mean the separations of families which spring up whenever any strong religious feeling is awakened in wife, or son, or daughter? What means the priestly influence in Protestant as well as Romish countries? Talk of reviving the family through theology, or theology through the family! why it often strikes me that they are the deadliest of all enemies!

Clergyman. These are facts upon which I earnestly wish to enter, and to examine them with your

help. I believe you will have terrible charges to bring against us Clergymen in all lands, charges which we must confess with shame and confusion of face. Before I come to those which belong to us officially as priests, I will tell you, for myself individually, that whenever I look back upon my life and upon the causes which I have for profound repentance in it, those which concern these family relations stand out with a breadth and aggravation which scarcely attach to any others. If the Spirit of God convinces us, as our Lord says, of sin, I am certain that He convinces us of these sins. They connect themselves with all others. They seem in some sense to lie beneath all others. At the same time, I can also bear witness that the meaning of Christian theology has presented itself to me through these relations, and as the eternal ground of them, in such a way that but for them all books of Divinity, all ordinances of the Church, even the Bible itself, would have been to me without significance or power. But most of all have these relations explained to me the force of those words of Christ, about hating father and mother, wife and child. There are words appended to those which you have forgotten, *And his own life (or soul) also*. I believe we shall sacrifice father and mother, wife and child, to our own life or soul, till we sacrifice them all together to Christ. Then He bids them, them and all

the affections that belong to them, live again; not upon the ground of self, not upon the ground of our own life or soul, but upon His own divine ground. The accusation which you will be able to make good against the priests of Christendom elsewhere and here, is, that they have not understood this, that they have sacrificed themselves, and have encouraged wives and daughters to sacrifice husbands and fathers, husbands and fathers to sacrifice wives and daughters—to their own lives or souls, and not to Christ. The soul has taken the place of Christ. And woe to the family, woe to the Church, woe to humanity and divinity when this is so!

DIALOGUE V.

DIALOGUE V.

THE NATURAL AND THE SUPER- NATURAL.

Layman. You concluded our last interview with some statements respecting your own experience and some comments on what you suppose to be an error of your own class. These remarks, let their value be what it may, did not meet the doubt which I proposed. You regard Baptism as the witness of a supernatural birth, a birth from above. To however few you confine, to however many you extend, the blessing of this birth, it is still opposed, you confess, to what is merely natural. But the birth of the flesh, as you would call it, is that which connects the child with its hearth and home. Must there not be an hostility—not at once developed perhaps, but inward and radical—between these two spheres of existence? Do not the facts in the history of Christendom to which I alluded and which, as you admitted, could

not be overlooked, illustrate this hostility and shew how inevitable it has been?

Clergyman. You acknowledged, I think, that there is something in every man which disposes him to become a brute.

Layman. He is an animal no doubt.

Clergyman. You do not suppose that he is the worse for being that. You would not wish him not to be an animal.

Layman. I do not see the use of wishing him to be something else than he is.

Clergyman. I should count it a sin to wish him something else than God has made him, to wish him not an animal or not a spirit. But this tendency to become a brute is something else surely than the fullest unfolding of his animal energies. We connect that with *manliness*, do we not?

Layman. Whither do these questions tend?

Clergyman. To this point. You call family relations and family affections *natural*. You justify that nomenclature by saying that a man's birth of a woman is a natural birth. No doubt a man comes into the world under the same law as an animal comes into the world. But if he follows the brutal instinct which is in him from his birth, and which he will soon find to be in him,—strengthening with his strength,—will he realise the dignity of *that* birth; will he be what a son or a brother should be?

Layman. Certainly not.

Clergyman. This state of son or brother will be his state; he cannot alter it; but he will always be in contradiction with it; always acting as if it were not his state; as if he were a solitary creature existing by and for himself?

Layman. That is true.

Clergyman. Then must there not be some counteracting power or influence over him—I do not say for some other end, for some higher end, but—for this end, that he may become a son or brother in the plain reasonable sense of the words?

Layman. It would be desirable to find such an influence if one could.

Clergyman. You would not call it an *unnatural* influence, seeing that it conspires with what you called—whether accurately or not, at least according to common usage—the *natural* affections and the *natural* relations?

Layman. Not unnatural of course in that sense.

Clergyman. But yet not *natural*, seeing that it thwarts this tendency which you confess is natural to us all—the tendency to become brutes.

Layman. This is an old knot. You remember how Hobbes cuts it with that sharp sword of his? His *artificial* man, his State or Leviathan, is the refuge from these dividing tendencies. It is not the interest of the majority to let them prevail.

A mighty despotism must be called in to restrain them.

Clergyman. Did it ever strike you that Hobbes *begins* from the individual and then creates the State to counteract what he discovers to be the unsocial inclinations of the individual; that the existence of men in families is a fact which he scarcely deemed worthy of his consideration?

Layman. It comes under his notice when he has to decide how the State should treat the child, whether it should be reckoned to belong to the mother or the father.

Clergyman. Assuredly. He solves that problem as it only could be solved by a consistent man looking at the subject from his point of view. The child is to be adjudged to the mother. All children are in fact to be treated as *natural* children; it is only the State which makes them anything else.

Layman. Does not our use of the word *legitimate* favour that conclusion?

Clergyman. That use of the word raises the whole question, whether Law is a mere device of the strongest, as Hobbes took it to be. We will not enter upon that discussion now. When you spoke of the family as having something natural and necessary in it, and yet as needing some influence to preserve it from being an utter contradiction, you

took it for granted, as we all do, that it exists before the State, that the artificial man did not create it.

Layman. I do hold that faith; though I have often the greatest difficulty in justifying it to myself. Hobbes is too strong for me when I come to argue with him. When I think of my father or mother or children, I forget him altogether.

Clergyman. I was sure you did. Yet it seems to me that this faith of yours, sound as I think it, needs something to sustain it. That Leviathan is a terrible monster; he will swallow up mother, wife, children, all, if we cannot find some way of piercing his scales.

Layman. Besides the artificial and the natural, what is there?

Clergyman. We began with speaking of the super-natural.

Layman. O yes; one is tormented to death with the question whether there is any little corner of our minds which entertains that. I begin to take snuff whenever I hear those controversies. They are good for professors and boys; I have to fight my way through the world as well as I can; what are they to me?

Clergyman. I am glad to hear that language from you. It is honest English. As long as it is a question about corners of the mind or the possi-

bility of great philosophers having some supernatural conceptions, the sooner we have done with it the better. Let the boys and the professors settle it as they like! You and I will not disturb them. But suppose instead of a super-natural something dwelling in some by-part of our minds, which only comes to ripeness in a wrapt sage or mystic—which degenerates into all ignorance and superstition in the legends of the vulgar—suppose instead of this that we ourselves are super-natural beings, that we could not be husbands, fathers, brothers, unless we were so—that the recognition of this super-natural state belonging to us as human beings, is necessary that we may not sink into a brutality which will make fatherhood, motherhood, brotherhood impossible—then I think you and I *must* take some part in the controversy; we cannot let the boys and the professors have it all to themselves.

Layman. In that case certainly not. But it will take some time to establish a paradox against which you priests will rebel as much at least as we unbelievers.

Clergyman. The paradox has certainly had much to encounter from both these classes. *How* much, we must consider as I said hereafter. The more wonder, therefore, how it has gone on asserting itself everywhere and in every age in despite of this opposition!

Layman. Everywhere and in every age? That is bold language!

Clergyman. Very bold indeed, if History did not support it. Did you ever consider how the Gods of all countries were associated with the thoughts of fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, brothers, sisters?

Layman. Undoubtedly. Hume dwells on that fact in his *Natural History of Religion*. It is one of his most powerful arguments to prove that the notion of a one Creator is the outgrowth of later refinement and speculation. In the refined days of Augustus, the Jupiter becomes little more than a name for the air. In simpler times he was the husband of Juno, the father of gods and men. The *patria potestas* was derived from him.

Clergyman. Hume has done most valuable service in fixing our thoughts upon these facts; they cannot be too seriously meditated.

Layman. You admit then that the low and animal conceptions of the heathens were connected with this family mythology—that it vanished as they advanced in civilization?

Clergyman. I admit that very low and animal conceptions mingled with this family mythology, and were always striving to make it purely animal. I affirm also that every story in this mythology indicates a struggle to overcome this animal

tendency, contains a solemn protest against it, is a witness that men, just so far as they are brothers and husbands, fathers and children, feel themselves to be connected with a super-natural economy, and turn to that for some protection against their animal instincts, even while those instincts are converting it into their justification and support.

Layman. This is a strange contradiction.

Clergyman. Just so. *The* contradiction of the old world; that which you must recognise if you deal fairly with the facts of the old world; that which Christendom has recognised while it has dwelt with so much interest and fondness on the legends of the old world, and yet in its deepest conscience has protested against them. We have felt that they were connected with all the civilization of the old world and with the corruption which stained and defaced that civilization. Christian apologists have been able to overwhelm us with proofs of that corruption. Scholars in love with pagan antiquity have been able to prove as decisively that there was a reverence for family relations, a sense of family purity, a horror of crimes against the family order, which did not separate itself from the mythology, but clung to it and appealed to it as the witness on its behalf. *The Iliad* and *Odyssee* are collections of family pictures; the family feeling is the very life of both poems. *The Iliad* and *Odyssee* bind together men and

gods. You feel that the heroes, the sons of the gods, could not be what they were, if they did not acknowledge relations between themselves and beings above them, if they did not believe that the beings above them felt the force of those relations. The gods demanded that men should observe those relations of kindred to each other of which they were themselves the authors. Here are the elements of Greek civilization; the Greek learnt his power over the animal—he acquired his exquisite perceptions of the animal form and of the human form—from the sense of his connection with the divine. Here too you have the elements of all that depraved this civilization, the Greek tendency to mere animalism, to intellectual cunning, to the worship of animal gods and cunning gods. At last there came an unbelief of any powers which could avenge animal vices or intellectual vices; this unbelief being mingled with the terror of some avengers who might exercise their power out of pure wantonness. A similar inquiry, pursued through every stage of Roman history, would discover still more remarkably, how every step in the worship was connected with reverence for fathers and with the preservation of the marriage bond. And then we should understand better that high civilization of which Hume speaks, when the gods who had been fathers, became mere powers of nature. We should understand why the best men at

that time—Virgil for instance—laboured honestly but vainly—having only a half belief themselves—to restore those memories and legends of the old time which connected piety to the father with piety to the gods, which made both together the foundation of all national greatness. I give you just the school-boy instances of what I said about the connection of the family life with the sense of the super-natural. The most obvious proofs are the best. But I wish that our scholars of the East and of the West had courage and patience to trace out in every direction the evidence of a principle, which they have only overlooked because it lay so close to them that they thought there could be no significance in it.

Layman. Modern mythological inquiries are certainly travelling in a different direction. The peculiarities of soil or climate on the one hand, the peculiarities of speech in different nations on the other, are resorted to as the chief and adequate explanation of the legends.

Clergyman. Very important all those explanations are. They point out the causes of the *differences* between the habits of thinking in various tribes and countries. I want to find out something that is *common* to them. Hume's remark—certainly not suggested by any strong desire to serve the cause of family or Christian life—supplies the hint.

Layman. But Hume's argument is designed

to overthrow the great pillar of the monotheistic disputant.

Clergyman. The more quickly we get rid of monotheistic disputants and their pillars, the more hope there may be of finding some rock upon which those who are not disputants and can be content with no artificial pillars, may stand.

Layman. But are you content that the evidences of oneness of design in Creation, should go for nothing?

Clergyman. Whether I am content or no, I believe they will go for nothing, unless men feel that they have something else to rest upon than a Designer; One to whom they can refer *themselves*, however little they may know about the world and its mechanism.

Layman. At least those indications of a common faith which you have discovered in Hume, however they may help you in reading Homer or the Roman History, have nothing to do with the chosen people. The one God of the Jew is expressly set in opposition to the gods of the Heathen. If you think that the Jews had a true revelation, *that* must stand altogether apart from the notions of fathers and husbands and brothers which you suppose to be at the foundation of the belief as well as of the civilization of other nations.

Clergyman. The revelation to the Jew inter-

prets, it seems to me, that connection between the family life and the super-natural life which we have discovered among the Heathens. That revelation explains to me how necessarily these thoughts are a part of human life so soon as it becomes human; *who* has imparted them to men, *who* has preserved them among men; why they became mingled with animal conceptions and overpowered by them; what the consequence of that degradation is; how they are at last almost buried in thoughts about nature; how they may arise and live again in one nation and one period as much as another.

Layman. Do you find all this in the records of the Bible?

Clergyman. All this, and I hope something more.

Layman. You are not prepared then even to give up the Old Testament as a collection of legends? Or perhaps you are? That is what you mean by connecting the mythological records with those which we have received as Divine oracles?

Clergyman. If I did not see so much meaning in the beliefs of the Heathen world, I might be ready to accept that modern and popular opinion. I might hold that there was no explanation of their truth, no exposure of their falsehood, to be found anywhere. I reverence and love the old Heathen world too much to entertain this opinion. The feeling

of all nations after a Father, if haply they might find Him, is too sacred in my eyes to have nothing which corresponds to it. I cannot adopt the horrible conclusion that the history and thoughts of so many thousands of years signified nothing, or that if they signified anything, He to whom they pointed, has given us no key to the signification. But I can still less believe that my own existence as a son and a father, is without an explanation. I should adopt that conclusion if I had not the books of the Old Testament, which some worship as letters and some dismiss as legends. Perceiving in those books a message of the living God, I can discover something of the purpose of my human relations, something of their connection with what is divine, something of my transgression against God in every act of indifference to them.

Layman. I have been wont to consider these books under one of those aspects in which you have described them. They have appeared to me either a collection of Divine texts with which was mixed a certain portion of ancient history, to be received unreservedly because it presents itself under the cover of those sacred texts; or else as legendary narratives in which certain useful lessons may be combined with much that is not useful. That the Hebrew books can throw any light upon a civilization so entirely different from that of the

Hebrew as the Greek or the Roman—still more that they can have any direct connection with the condition and life of Englishmen in the 19th century—has scarcely entered into my imagination.

Clergyman. Oftener perhaps into your heart and conscience and reason, than into your imagination. Yet into that also. These books have stamped their image upon you when you have least been aware of it. Some who call themselves infidels, may believe them more than we do who turn them into sermons. As I said before, I want your help to assist me in entering into their meaning and making it bear upon my life.

Layman. I am not used to such applications from Clergymen. But such aid as I can afford you, shall be at your service.

DIALOGUE VI.

DIALOGUE VI.

THE REVELATION TO THE FAMILY OF ABRAHAM.

Layman. Your object, when we last talked together, was to prove that Religion and Domestic Life have some mysterious and inseparable connexion. You traced it in the Pagan mythology: in other words, you shewed me that what you would call *false* religion, was allied with family relations. You are to make good your point to-day in reference to what you would call the *true* Religion, that which is contained in the Scriptures.

Clergyman. I do not remember that I introduced the word Religion into our dialogue. I generally avoid it, because I always doubt whether I understand it myself; still more, whether I give the same force to it as the person with whom I happen to be conversing.

Layman. You talked of a 'sense of the supernatural:' is not that Religion?

Clergyman. Perhaps so: I do not know certainly. This sense of the supernatural among the Greeks came forth in the acknowledgment of actual Rulers over men who were bound to them by some tie like that which binds a parent to a child, a husband to a wife, a brother to a brother or sister, and who, in virtue of that relationship imparted to their human kinsmen a knowledge of various things which they needed to know, raising them by a divine influence from brutality to civility, from slavery to freedom. The sense of the supernatural in the Roman came forth in the acknowledgment of a Father in the Capitol, the source of obedience and order. Services to the gods may have been enjoined, and these may have constituted what we call a religion. But the acts and offices which the gods were believed to have performed for men by reason of their authority over them and sympathy with them are far more interesting and, I apprehend, far more important than the schemes of devotion and sacrifice which were devised as marks of gratitude for these favours, as securities for the continuance of them, as means of obtaining fresh gifts or averting expected wrath. I would not forget these religious schemes; they deserve careful examination. But it is a great mistake, in treating the faith of any people whatsoever, not to speak first of what they felt to be first; of that which was the subject of all their legends.

Indeed this inversion, which is so habitual to us all, has originated in great measure from our overlooking the point upon which I am trying to fix your attention. Men are led by their family relationships to feel after powers to lead *them* and educate *them*. The priest comes in and devises plans for directing the directors, for bringing the gods into conformity with the wishes and tempers of their worshippers. The *false* religion which I attribute to the heathens arises from this experiment. The principle on which the worship rests is contradicted by the worship. The design and effect of it is to diminish, at last to subvert, the confession of superior goodness and wisdom which is its justification.

Layman. I may remind you of these statements when we come to speak of Christian prayer and sacrifice, and may ask you how they can possibly escape the charge which you have brought against the heathen prayer and sacrifice. In the meantime let me hear what you have to say about the Hebrew religion.

Clergyman. After the remarks I have just made, you can hardly expect that I should talk of the Hebrew *religion*. If the books of Scripture set forth a system of religion belonging to a particular race, they may stand out in *contrast* to the sacred books of other races; they cannot interpret what other races were thinking and feeling about divine powers and

their actings. But if the Scriptures throughout set forth a Being who is acting for His creatures, revealing Himself to His creatures, and if this revelation comes through those relations of the family which led the other nations to believe in divine revelations, the connexion between Jewish history and their histories may be a very close one; each may be an unspeakable help to the understanding of the other.

Layman. That perhaps modern students might be willing enough to admit. They complain of the exclusive worshippers of the Bible for separating it from all other books, its history from all other histories.

Clergyman. There is excellent reason, as it appears to me, for these complaints. As a theologian, I reckon them of the highest value.

Layman. But does not theology sink into mythology when you attend to them?

Clergyman. No. Mythology craves for theology. Those myths about gods related to men—caring for men—cannot be all false, cannot be explained by natural phenomena. Is there a true ground for them in the discovery of some Being who has formed human relations to be the expression of His nature, the sign to them that theirs is the image of His?

Layman. Who can discover such a Being?

Clergyman. The instincts of men, indicated by their mythology, say, what the highest reason says, "He can only be known if He discovers Himself."

Layman. So you arrive at the denial of all natural religion. Only that which is revealed is worth anything.

Clergyman. The word Religion I have craved leave to dismiss as ambiguous. I certainly hold, with St Paul, that God has revealed Himself to men everywhere; that their knowledge of what is good and of what is not good is the effect of His revelation; that their not liking to retain Him in their knowledge is the cause of their evil deeds and evil habits.

Layman. You abandon, then, the chief claim which is alleged on behalf of the Scriptures, that they contain a revelation, whilst those who did not possess them were left to the light of nature.

Clergyman. I cannot put forth a claim for the Scriptures which would oblige me to contradict the Scriptures; not in one passage, but everywhere. Instead of treating it as an exceptional event that God should speak to men, they assume that He is always speaking to men.

Layman. To Abraham and his race.

Clergyman. The very first book of the Bible tells us that He made Himself understood by Abimelech the Philistine, one of the races which

the Israelites drove out; by Pharaoh the Egyptian, one of the races which the Israelites had most reason to abhor.

Layman. Wherein, then, are Abraham and his race more fortunate than the rest of mankind?

Clergyman. We considered that question before in reference to a later period. There are two conceptions of good fortune. One is that which prevailed among the Jews in the days of the Apostles, and which prevails among a number of English Christians in the days of Queen Victoria. It is good fortune to be saved out of a world which God has doomed to perdition. The other is that which was expressed in the covenant to Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." The acceptance of the second belief by St Paul in place of the first was the effect of his conversion. Then he preached Christ's Redemption to Gentiles and Jews equally. The acceptance of this belief by our forefathers—in spite of a multitude of adverse feelings in their minds which might have hindered the expression of it—is attested by the distinction in our Catechism, "God the Son has redeemed me and all mankind. God the Holy Ghost sanctifieth me and all the elect people of God." The elect people of God, if the Scripture says truly, were from the first set apart to be a blessing to all the families of the earth.

Layman. But that Jewish covenant to which

you refer, whatever was to come of it eventually, was a denunciation of all who were not of the chosen race. It was a formal act of separation between them and the rest of mankind.

Clergyman. If we believe it to be GOD'S Covenant, not a scheme devised by some lawgiver, it was the consecration of a particular family. That family was adopted by a Being who could not be apprehended by the senses. The sign of the Covenant denoted that they were not to be the servants of those fleshly lusts which led and lead to the ruin of families, to the worship of visible gods.

Layman. The story of Joseph and his Brethren does not exhibit a high state of family affection in the children of the Covenant.

Clergyman. Therein lies its worth. The children of the Covenant are just like other shepherds; with the same wild animal tendencies. The one who believes that the Covenant means something—that an actual God has made him and his brothers to be brothers, and cares for them as well as him—is able to fulfil his place in the family, to be its deliverer, to be the teacher of wisdom and foresight to the king of an already organised people. There is the true divine civilization; the first step to the true order of a nation. There is the comment upon the legends of Greece which point to a civilization—also in a very limited circle—commencing

from a divine source and always connecting itself with family sympathies and the punishment of family transgressions.

Layman. The next books, at all events, bring us into the midst of a scheme of civil, military, and ecclesiastical government—of a priesthood and sacrifices as organised as any in the heathen world.

Clergyman. The next books tell us that the God of Abraham revealed Himself to an Israelite exile as the I AM;—at the same time as hearing the groans of a people in captivity and meaning to deliver them. They announce that God shewed Himself mightier than the tyrant, was the Deliverer and Guide of the exiles; that He gave them commandments grounded upon the title, “I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the house of bondage;” that He gave them laws which were suitable to them as a people whom He had destined to occupy a certain country; that He gave them that country; that He appointed their priests; that He fixed what sacrifices should signify His forgiveness and reconciliation to them. In other words, these books nowhere purport to contain a scheme of religion for appeasing God or giving Him pleasure. They purport everywhere to be a declaration of His Will, a manifestation of His grace towards a set of human creatures whom He has claimed as His.

Layman. You suppose that you can establish the accuracy and fidelity of the documents which contain this history?

Clergyman. You remember that I asked for your help as a Layman to understand them and to justify them.

Layman. That was your irony; one of the paradoxes with which you like sometimes to mystify me.

Clergyman. It was nothing of the kind. These books would have been lost if they had been left to Jewish Rabbis or Christian Clerks. The Laity found out the sense of them; the Laity claimed them as their possession.

Layman. You mean in the sixteenth century.

Clergyman. In the fourteenth also, before the revival of letters; when they could only get a report of them from the Vulgate; when the study of original documents was impossible. Then did the English tradesmen and handicraftsmen find in those books their deliverance from the tyranny of Italian and celibate priests; a witness that God was speaking to them; a divine message to them, as fathers, husbands, brothers, citizens. The Italian celibate priests made great fight, and seemed to prevail, for they persuaded the secular power to use its weapons on their side. But it would not do. The message had been heard. It had gone home to the hearts

of the common people. The doctors said they could know nothing about it. But they did know. It interpreted their lives. Documents signified little to them. This was a word of life. It spoke to the man in the man.

Layman. You cannot describe the 16th century as careless about documents, however little criticism might be exercised upon them.

Clergyman. No, the Renaissance had come. Original MSS. were sought after and devoured. But Printing had come too. The books had a voice for men as well as for scholars. The old 14th century spirit broke through all the learning and refinement of the 15th. The celibate priests were glad to patronise *that* learning and refinement. But *this* spirit, the spirit of the lay people—of the fathers, brothers, husbands—they could never bind or bribe to be their servant. And the *people* could not be content with the most exquisite Paganism. The people demanded the Hebrew records, because they were not images or pictures of that which had been, but words coming from Him who is. And the more they read of the Hebrews as men of like passions with them, who forgot God and His covenant, who fell into all kinds of idolatries and brutalities, the more confidently they averred, ‘This word is true; it is for us; God is punishing us, and restoring us, as He punished these Jews and restored them.’

Layman. All this feeling is of the past. It does not belong to the laymen of our day. You cannot revive it.

Clergyman. But families belong to our days as to former days; oppressed nations belong to our days as to former days; Priests, who think God not a Deliverer but an Enslaver, belong to our days as to former days; Scholars, who put themselves out of communion with human life and the actual conditions of men, and only debate about the authenticity or non-authenticity of documents, belong to our days as to former days. There will be a lay rebellion against the inhumanity of divines and of scholars, against the separation of the past from the present, against the scorn of family relations and common life, as there was in former days.

Layman. You are crying for another Ziska to save you from polite Churchmen. Will not your Bohemians denounce that union between the Hebrew and Pagan wisdom which you seem to recognize?

Clergyman. I want no Ziska; though I fully expect Ziskas will come if Priests do not learn betimes that priestly lore is not that which separates God from man; if scholars do not learn that humane lore is not that which exalts a class and despises man. The Reformation begot a noble scholarship which testified to the sympathy between the Hebrew and the Greek. Look at the Fairy Queen. Look at

the Hymn to the Nativity, at Comus, at Samson Agonistes.

Layman. The first book of Paradise Lost treats the heathen Gods as Devils.

Clergyman. That thought was working in the mind of the Puritan as it had worked in the minds of the Christian Fathers along with the other. A living faith inspiring a living scholarship might justify both. Our Dryasdusts, orthodox and neological, busy only about the credibility or incredibility of documents, can see no meaning in either. They look only at their stop-watches. They merely ask themselves whether it is possible or impossible to make out a case for the Hebrew books. They have never faced the inquiry, Is it possible or impossible to restore the domestic life of England, of Christendom, of the world?

Layman. Do you think we can get an answer to that question by travelling over the ground which our fathers trod in the 14th or 16th century?

Clergyman. I do not; I believe we are fighting a far greater and more terrible battle than they were fighting, and require different armour if we would not lose all that they won, if we would conquer regions which they could not conquer. We cannot bless all the families of the earth if we think chiefly of Abraham as they did; if we do not dwell much more upon Abraham's Seed.

Layman. You mean that Christianity reconciles the Pagan and the Hebrew elements; and that (according to the somewhat obsolete boast) it has been the great means of elevating the condition of the woman.

Clergyman. I do not think that *Christianity* was Abraham's Seed; that *Christianity* has united Jew and Gentile; or that *Christianity* has elevated the condition of the woman. Just so far as *Christianity* has been substituted for *Christ*, I believe it has overthrown what was strong and vital in the Hebrew and the Greek, and has had no power over Society except to distract it and impoverish it. But the proclamation of Christ as the Son of God and as the Head of the human race; this I believe has been and will be the fulfilment of the promise to Abraham. So far as this proclamation has been heard and has been taken in, so far I am satisfied the divine history of the Jew in its principle and substance has been vindicated; so far the revelations to the Gentile have been seen to be not contradicted by it, but assumed and implied in it. So far I believe the man and the woman have both been raised, one not more than the other; one by the help of the other. When that proclamation is thoroughly made, I doubt not that all the false religions of the earth will fall down; all that is true in each will be brought forth. When that proclamation is fully

made, I doubt not that the worship of the family will sustain and renovate the life of the family, and will clear away the insincerity and defilements which have mingled with all our other worship.

DIALOGUE VII.

DIALOGUE VII.

THE FATHER AND THE SON.

Layman. After all, you scarcely seem to fancy that we need arrive at the Christian temple through the Jewish vestibule. You know of some side-door through which you can admit us. That would be an advantage, though whether we shall ever reach the altar by that entrance may be doubtful.

Clergyman. The door through which I would lead you is by the altar. The Christian sacrifice is, I believe, the portal to Christian worship; emphatically to family worship.

Layman. You do not then begin where you promised to begin, from the Father; there must be a ladder to come into His presence.

Clergyman. A ladder set upon earth and reaching to heaven was what Jacob saw in his vision.

The voice of God was at the top of that ladder. May not He who is above speak to those below? May not the ladder be first let down from heaven that those on earth may behold it and mount it?

Layman. The metaphor has overpowered me. I am sorry that I ventured upon it.

Clergyman. We do not need metaphors. The time is coming, said Christ, when I *will no more speak in parables, but will shew you plainly of the Father.* That time, it seems to me, came when He ascended on high. From that time the kingdom of heaven was opened to men. The Father became not the object only to whom prayers and sacrifices might be offered, but the ground of all prayers and sacrifices.

Layman. That you maintained was the distinction between the heathen and the Jewish worship.

Clergyman. I did. But we lose sight of that distinction—the Jewish worship becomes like the heathen worship—the book of Leviticus is turned into an invention of priests instead of a book of divine laws which controlled all the decrees and self-will of priests—if we merely take the New Testament as a sequel to the Old; if we do not accept it as the revelation or manifestation of that which was before the Old; that which had been hidden for ages and generations in God, and was brought to light by the Spirit which the Christ poured out on men.

Layman. You are getting into the heights of your theology. I cannot follow you.

Clergyman. But these heights of theology are what laymen in our days need, that they may be delivered from the impostures and tyranny of us priests.

Layman. We have some of us fancied there is a different mode of escaping them.

Clergyman. By denying the existence of a theology? That you will find to be no escape.

Layman. I may not go the length of denying all theology, that is, of being an Atheist; but if I did I should surely be out of the reach of priestcraft.

Clergyman. Not the least out of the reach of it. In the greatest peril of it.

Layman. You mean that Atheism provokes a vehement reaction?

Clergyman. I mean that priestcraft has Atheism for its groundwork; that when Atheism prevails priestcraft prevails; that when God breaks in upon us and scatters our Atheism, priestcraft becomes impossible. The priest must learn some other trade, or else be a true man.

Layman. Still you spoke of sacrifices. Do not sacrifices imply a priest?

Clergyman. Certainly; a priest of God; a priest who *does* the will of God; not a priest who has

arts or contrivances for acting upon the will of God; for making that other than it is.

Layman. But sacrifices must be intended in some sense to affect the will of God.

Clergyman. The book of the New Testament, which is written especially to illustrate and explain the nature of the Christian sacrifice, gives this as its highest expression: *Lo I come! in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will, O God. Yea, thy law is within my heart; I am content to do it.*

Layman. The theory of the Christian sacrifice, as it is expounded by all the Christian teachers I am acquainted with, is that some offering was necessary to propitiate the Eternal Father, and that no less an offering than that of the body and blood of Christ would propitiate Him. Have you any theory to produce instead of this?

Clergyman. None.

Layman. You are content with this then?

Clergyman. I can be content with no theory about a perfect self-oblation. It seems to me that the meaning of the act, the life of the act, the power of the act, perishes the moment you reduce it into a theory. You cannot devise a form of words which shall not set up one side of the truth against the other, which should not turn the bond of peace and reconciliation into an excuse for strife and hostility.

Layman. You object to the word Propitiation?

Clergyman. Not at all. I object to any departures from the Scripture language about Propitiation. St Paul speaks of God setting forth His Son as a Propitiation. Adhere to that form of expression—follow it to its furthest limits—and I conceive the doctrine of Propitiation is the divinest and most consolatory which the human heart can receive. Desert that form of expression; refuse to regard GOD as Himself the author of the Propitiation; and I believe you substitute heathen for Christian worship.

Layman. But your second Article speaks of Christ reconciling the Father to us.

Clergyman. Would to God that those who are so fond of quoting that *clause* of our second Article would read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the whole of it! Joyfully do I accept that phrase, if they will acknowledge that the Word or Son of God which was made very Man is the ground and Head of Humanity, that in Him alone does God behold our race. That He has reconciled and atoned men to God, I fully and entirely believe, because He is one with God, because in our Nature He entirely did the will of God and finished His work. The idea of the second Article, the very letter of it, is contradicted by those who would separate the Son from the Father, and make any one act of His not an act of obedience to the Father.

Layman. Do not your Articles contain a theory about sacrifice?

Clergyman. I owe them much thanks for delivering me from various theories about it, which have distracted the Church, and for shewing me the way out of all theories. I do not want to trouble you laymen with the Articles; but I fancy they have hindered us clergymen from forging many chains which, left to ourselves, we should have put upon your necks.

Layman. You have made us wear a fair number in spite of the Articles.

Clergyman. I quite admit it. Nor do I confide in the Articles, useful as I think they have been, to restore our theology. Separated from their proper ground work, they may add to our confusions, they may be used to justify the very theories against which they bear witness. They were compiled when the Creeds, which contain that higher theology whereof I spoke, the living theology, had burst through their school bandages, had shaken off the popular religion of the confessional, and had come forth announcing the union of the Father and the Son, as if these names were real names, and not figures of speech or terms of art. Now that those names have again lost their significance, have again been overpowered by the logic of much feebler schools than those of the old time, have again been oppressed by a popular religion based, as

that of the confessional was, upon depravity not upon righteousness, upon Adam not upon Christ—we want other help than the Articles can afford us, to work out a spiritual and moral reformation.

Layman. You expect that help from family worship?

Clergyman. O no! Not from family worship; but from the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who I believe has made the family to supply that true *organon* of theology which all theories and schemes of divinity have tried to be, and have failed to be. Family worship constructed upon the notions that have become prevalent in our time, constructed upon the theory of men as merely creatures who are in some way to find their way to a Creator, who are to pay certain acts of homage to Him because He demands such acts, and may punish those that withhold them—this family worship only serves to perpetuate all the false religion, all the false morality which is working among us and destroying us. But we fathers must sometimes ask ourselves these questions: “Does our relation to our children involve only a sacrifice on their parts? Does it not involve also a sacrifice on ours? Must not the sacrifice be mutual? Must it not begin from us that it may be rendered by them? Is sacrifice inconsistent with authority? Do not the plainest facts of family life shew that it is not?”

Layman. Certainly these are practical questions enough, and difficult questions enough. They present themselves to us at every turn of our lives. I hear it said often, *solvuntur ambulando*. I suppose it is so. But I cannot boast that I find it so. The walk seems to grow more rugged as one advances. The hills are higher, the stones are larger. I ask for a Macadam, and do not find him.

Clergyman. Thank God that you have not found the road so easy as it seems to many. Thank God that you have been forced to face these obstructions, and to find that neither you nor any mortal Macadam can remove them. Thank God, for He is giving you a lesson in theology that all the clergy in the universe could not give you.

Layman. I do not see that the mere use of the words 'Our Father' can set these things right.

Clergyman. I am sure it cannot; or they would have been set right long ago; the family life of England would be something else than it is. We have used those words 'Our Father' very carelessly, very profanely. They have not been utterly dead words to any of us. They have often been nearly dead to almost all of us. They will become utterly dead if we do not consider on what ground we have all a right to use them.

Layman. You maintain then that what you call your high theology is necessary that we may

enter into this simple work of being fathers and children.

Clergyman. If you find that a very simple work, no. If you find it a very complicated and difficult work, yes.

Layman. Complicated and difficult through the vicissitudes of one's own temper, over-austere one day, over-indulgent the next; through the varieties of the tastes and the perversities of the wills of those who are committed to our trust; through the contradictory influences of different parts of society with which we are brought in contact; and I must add also, through the maxims and interference of different clerical advisers and directors who separate some members of families from the rest, and teach them to seek spiritual blessings by renouncing what one used to consider the moral duties of obedience to parents, and care for brothers and sisters.

Clergyman. Hundreds and thousands will respond to your enumeration of the causes of your perplexity. The more I have experienced them and meditated upon them, and observed how they cross and aggravate each other—and how they are affecting the condition of the whole land—the more have I been driven in sheer despair to perceive that the things which I say I believe, are actually true. I have perceived that a Father delighting in a Son, a Son delighting in a Father, a Spirit in whom they dwell

and are united for ever, are at the ground of all human life. I have learned that if the Father did *not* give up the Son, if the Son did *not* give up Himself, the one commanding, the other obeying—the mutual sacrifice, not destroying the idea of authority but sustaining it,—there is nothing to hold the universe together, there is no root out of which human sacrifice can grow, there is no ground on which the relations of the family can subsist. I have found that the Spirit of sacrifice who proceeds from the Father and the Son, must come to men that they may be able to offer themselves as sacrifices, and that so offering themselves they may be able to fulfil their duties one towards another, each in his own place; none interfering with the other more than the earth interferes with the sun.

Layman. This sounds well; but what has it to do with one's old conception of the sacrifice of Christ as being necessary to take away the sin of the world?

Clergyman. *That* necessity comes out with a fulness and a breadth which no other consideration could give it. Sacrifice is evidently the opposite of the sin of the world. For that sin is, as we all feel it to be, the self-seeking, the self-willing, which sets us at war with each other. These two powers have always fought, must always fight together. One must conquer the other. The heathens felt it to

be so as we feel it. Sacrifice was the power in the old world as it is the power in the new that struggled with indolence, cowardice, tyranny, that made families and nations civilized and free. The awful question was, whether those who made the sacrifices, those who procured benefits for their fellows, were not like Prometheus fighting against the Supreme Will, suffering agonies from its cruelty, its hatred of their race? This was the doubt which was answered by Him who said, "Therefore doth my Father love me because I give up my life for the sheep," who said that He "came down from Heaven not to do His own Will, but the Will of Him who sent Him." No! This *Theologia domestica* does not war with the announcement of a sacrifice which takes away the sin of the world. That grand text expresses its fundamental maxim. The corruption and mutilation of the text, the scandalous fraud by which punishment is substituted for sin, and believers for the *world*—these divorce it from household morality. With that change of phrases, whether made openly or covertly, all who desire to vindicate catholic truth, the truth which was asserted at the Reformation, the truth which is to raise and restore families, must keep no terms. They must denounce it wherever they meet with it, they must track the falsehood which is its parent into every hiding-place.

Layman. But if you retain the word *world* in this text, you will have to shew how sin came into the world; you must begin from Adam and explain our inheritance of evil. Otherwise, as I have been told so often, redemption has no significance.

Clergyman. I do not think that we are much wiser than the Apostles, or know much more about the Gospel. That was not their method. They did not talk about Adam, or the inheritance of evil in their sermons. There is one great allusion to Adam in the Epistles, an allusion strangely at variance with the theories which occur in our modern divinity. St Paul tells us that the free gift is *more* extensive than the offence, that as through the disobedience of Adam *the* many were reckoned or set down as sinners, through the obedience of Christ, *the* many are reckoned or set down as righteous. The Apostles did not feel the difficulty which we feel in preaching deliverance till they had reduced sin into a theory and deduced it from an ancestor. They found men groaning under the burden of evil, they found nations under the hoof of an oppressor, families broken and divided by the sins of husbands and wives, fathers and children. They found them believing in false cruel gods, enemies whom it was a blessing to forget, who must be bribed to be merciful and just. They preached of Christ as the Redeemer from those evils and curses which they had not to trace to a progenitor, or to

prove worthy of punishment, for they *were* punishing, destroying, damning their own very selves and the whole of human society.

Layman. We are certainly not so free from these evils in our day that it is necessary for us to become antiquarians, and to make out a scheme about the nature and origin of evil before we hear the news of a deliverance from it, if deliverance there is. But there is the point, *If deliverance there is.* You spoke of a finished salvation. My mother used to speak of it, and yet here we are! Think of the condition of our English families among the lower orders as our sanitary reformers disclose it to us. Think of the condition of our families of the upper and middle class as the court of Sir Cresswell Cresswell discovers it to us! My friend, we are in Christian England; this is the year of our Lord 1862.

Clergyman. I do think of all these things. When I cease to think of them, O remind me of them! And I think also how much I and my class might have done which the courts cannot do; which our brave sanitary reformers cannot do; how much we might have sustained all their efforts, and laid a deep ground for them; how we have failed to do it. I could not entertain the one thought without the other. If I repent for my land, I must repent first for myself. I believe we have been set

in the world to preach of a Father of all these families, who has actually redeemed them and adopted them to be children in His Son, and that we have kept back this message from them, that we have perverted it, that we have contradicted it. The confession of that sin must be wrought into all our church-worship, into all our family worship. When we do confess it, we shall be able to ask the Father who gave His Son a sacrifice for us all, to give us repentance, to convert us to Himself, to make our households into blessings, not curses, to the earth.

Layman. I should like to speak to you a little about this repentance and conversion. They are words, the last especially, with which my mother's teaching made me very familiar. I fancied the idea of it would be banished, or almost banished, from your theology, at least that you would only apply it to the unbaptized. But you seem to speak of asking God to convert you and the clergy. I suppose you apply the language in some peculiar sense.

Clergyman. O my friend, will you always be suspecting me of peculiar senses? When can I speak plainly and directly if not when I am speaking of the evils which *I* have committed, of the power which *I* need to set me right? Surely if I can slip in a double sense here, I must be far gone in priest-

craft and falsehood, I must require a new heart and a right spirit indeed!

Layman. When we meet next, let that be our topic. If you are to teach me the use of this weapon of family worship which you seem to think so powerful, I suspect we must begin here.

Clergyman. I am not teaching you. I am learning from you and with you. I approve your method. It is an old one. I cannot discover a better.

DIALOGUE VIII.

DIALOGUE VIII.

REPENTANCE AND CONVERSION.

Layman. You have been descanting on the loftiest parts of divinity, the Sacrifice of Christ, His Sonship, the Trinity. I used to be told that Repentance and Conversion belonged to the very elements of Divinity. We have dropped down, with your consent, to these; nay, I think you led the way to them. I am no judge of such matters, but it strikes me that you are reversing the natural order of topics. After you had led me through a course of initiatory discipline, you might have introduced me to the higher mysteries of your Faith. If I was qualified to know anything of them, how can this Repentance and Conversion be necessary for me? Since my lungs could not breathe the air of that sublime region, I for my part am better content to hear of that which touches my common existence, which assumes

that I am a *terræ filius*. Though I may not profit even by this humbler lore—or go through the processes of confession which you would require of me, I at least have no doubt that some change would do me good, that I might be a much truer man than I am. I should not mind a little of the frightening which preachers commonly resort to, if it could any how be made to tell upon me. But you have tried to give me such a sense of my own grandeur, you have assured me so confidently of my connection—being such a person as I feel myself to be—with a spiritual economy, that I cannot conceive how you will be able suddenly to change your note and bring me to the level of a penitent.

Clergyman. In those days came one preaching in the wilderness of Judæa, and saying, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. When Jesus went in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, He preached, saying, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. He sent forth His disciples into the towns of Judæa and Galilee, saying, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. So the New Testament speaks. I am trying to follow its lessons.

Layman. That means I suppose, Repent, that you may have a chance of going to the heaven which you are about to hear of. Perhaps it may be a greater encouragement to some people to be promised rewards than to be threatened with punishments. I

cannot say that I feel it so. The rewards are very shadowy. Of the punishments we have a tolerable intimation in what we actually suffer.

Clergyman. I quite agree with you in your feeling upon this point. Nor do I think John the Baptist would have disagreed with you. We do not usually speak of him as a flatterer. He addressed his countrymen, the most religious part of them, as a generation of vipers. He said the axe was laid to the root of the tree, that all who did not bear good fruit would be hewn down and cast into the fire. Nor did he promise that He who was coming after him would exercise a more gentle discipline. His fan was in His hand. He would thoroughly purge His floor. He would burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

Layman. Certainly, these are not soft words.

Clergyman. Quite the reverse. Nor are they mingled with any, so far as I read, pointing to any of those *chances* of blessedness which you hint at. There were plenty of speculators upon such chances in that day. The Pharisees were investing their capital with that due regard to an interest in both worlds which many urge upon us now. The Pharisees were those to whom John the Baptist said, "Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

Layman. The Kingdom of Heaven has, I am

aware, a technical signification in the commentaries on the New Testament. They say it does not mean what it means in sermons. It stands, if I remember the phrase rightly, for the Christian dispensation.

Clergyman. And what does the Christian dispensation stand for?

Layman. That you must tell me.

Clergyman. I should say for the Kingdom of Heaven. We know something about a kingdom. We live under one. If a dispensation may be translated into a kingdom, I can form some guess about its meaning. If a kingdom is translated into a dispensation, it becomes a word in the dictionary.

Layman. But we are always told that the Jews who interpreted the word *Kingdom* literally, fell into the greatest mistakes about it. They expected an actual king, a temporal king.

Clergyman. In other words they expected a half-king; a king who had not a dominion over the life and spirit of men; who because he had not dominion over their life and spirit had not a dominion over their bodies; who could not deliver from any evil, could not heal any sickness; a poor, miserable, shadow king, seated upon a high throne, knowing nothing of his subjects! Or an emperor, employed all day in tormenting his subjects, in killing flies when he had not the amusement of killing men. There

is the true consummation and outcome of what the Pharisees were looking for. They expected such a king to reign over them as reigned already in Rome. They hoped he would set up his power in Jerusalem, and that he would come armed with authority from God to trample down the Sadducees, the Publicans and the heathens—they being his ministers in the blessed and divine work of crushing their enemies, that is to say, the universe. “The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand” in the mouth of John the Baptist, in the mouth of our Lord, in the mouth of His disciples meant, ‘Such a kingdom as that which you have imagined for yourselves is a kingdom of hell; God does not reign over it, but the devil. The Son of God is coming as the Son of Man to destroy the works of the devil, to manifest that kingdom from which powers go forth to deliver the captive, to heal the sick, to bless the poor, to raise the dead—above all from which a power is going forth, to give repentance, to convert men’s spirits from darkness to light, from the worship of a devil to the worship of a Father. Repent and be converted, for the King of heaven, the King of your spirits, is calling you and enabling you to repent and be converted.’

Layman. According to this statement the New Testament call to conversion is addressed as much to the religious as to the irreligious.

Clergyman. It would seem to be addressed in the most stirring and threatening language to them. Those who said "We have Abraham to our father," those who were comfortable in the thought that they were righteous and despised others, were the most earnestly warned to flee from a wrath to come. A righteous judgment would surely overtake the elect people who were exalting themselves above the Gentiles, would overtake the city that supposed it was to sit as a queen and have all other cities subject to it. But the message of repentance was not to stop with them. It was to reach the publican and the harlot. It was not needful to tell *them* of a wrath to come. They wanted to hear of a Son of Man who could deliver them from the wrath that was upon them, who could tell them that a Father was seeking to release them from the bonds of the evil Spirit by which they were tied, and which they could not break for themselves. Every word of Christ, every act of Christ was a message concerning such a Father, was a witness against the tyranny of that evil Spirit.

Layman. You seem as if you accepted the language of the New Testament about those who were tormented with evil spirits literally.

Clergyman. I do accept it literally. You clever men, you great liberals, have found out that there are

no evil spirits who hold the bodies and spirits of men bound in fearful misery and captivity. Every street and alley in every city of Europe laughs your wisdom to scorn. I must believe in a bondage which I feel myself, which I hear confessed in every cry that ascends from every human will against the foes who are crushing it and preventing it from being "what it dreams of, happy, high, majestic." I must accept the only practical testimony which ever has been given in the world, that there is a will which can destroy these fetters, which can raise human spirits and human bodies out of their tyranny, which has sworn to accomplish that work.

Layman. How would you define the conversion you speak of?

Clergyman. I know no better, no other, definition than that of the man who had just described his own conversion. He called it *the turning from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God.* He did not believe that he had turned himself; he believed that God had turned him. He did not believe that he could turn any man's will; he believed that it was the will of God to bring all men to the knowledge of the truth and to life.

Layman. All men?

Clergyman. St Paul says so.

Layman. I have heard some of my liberal friends rebuked for calling St Paul an intelligent

though an imperfect teacher, one of whom we in the 19th century are much in advance. Are not some of your orthodox divines of the same opinion?

Clergyman. I am afraid they are. I might listen to them, or to the liberals either, if St Paul did not continually convince me of my narrowness, ignorance, stupid unbelief in the love and wisdom and power of God; if I did not find that the liberals and the orthodox both were trying in their different ways to cheat us of the witness which he bears on behalf of the sons of men.

Layman. I am not sure that I yet see your justification for speaking to me of those high mysteries which are embodied in your Creeds, before you spoke of this conversion from darkness to light. The kingdom of heaven, John the Baptist said, was at hand. Do you mean that it is still at hand?

Clergyman. I think that we are in it.

Layman. In it?

Clergyman. To be baptized into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is, it seems to me, to be admitted into that kingdom which Christ said was at hand. We are surrounded by it. It is encircling our spirits, as much as the air we breathe is encircling our bodies. Because I think so, I call upon myself, I call upon all men, to repent and receive the good news of this kingdom, to be

converted from the worship of the devil to the worship of a Father, from offering ourselves and our children as sacrifices to the devil, that we may offer ourselves and our children as sacrifices to a Father. If I were not convinced that God had adopted us into this kingdom, had made us His children, and was witnessing by His Spirit to every one of us that he is a child of God, I could not pray for myself or for any that we might be converted from evil to good, from falsehood to truth.

Layman. You may ask that for me; how can you ask it for yourself?

Clergyman. How can I draw distinctions between you and myself? God knows what you want, and what I want. He makes me know what a multitude of evil ways there are in me from which I need to be converted every day; what unbelief there is in me in His Fatherhood; what a disposition to stand on the ground of my own accursed and selfish nature; what an utter unwillingness to sacrifice myself to Him and for others. All this He shews me continually about myself. And what He shews me, is the least part of what He knows of my necessities. He does not tell me all this about you. I do believe however most inwardly that you require renovation as I do. I am certain that the same God whom I have a right to trust for myself, I have a right to trust for you, that He cares for you and for

all men immeasurably more than I can think of or dream of, that my sin consists in not caring for you and for all men as He cares for you. The confidence therefore with which I ask conversion for myself, if it is true confidence, must be for you and for mankind as much as for myself. In fact, till I have renounced myself and have trusted in the Redemption that has been wrought, in the sacrifice that has been accepted for mankind, my hope for myself is a feeble, flickering, ungodly one.

Layman. Do not say that. So speaking you condemn my mother and those who feel as she felt.

Clergyman. No, I do not condemn them: I justify them. I know that this was in their hearts when they were praying. I know that when your mother said, "God be merciful to me a sinner," she meant, 'I have need that Thou shouldest convert me and uphold me. I ask Thee and trust Thee to do it, because I believe Thou hast manifested Thy love to all mankind in Thy Son. That love comes down even to me. Thy Spirit prays in me with groanings that cannot be uttered for Thy mercy to all men, when I ask for mercy to myself.'

Layman. Would you then begin your family worship with some act of repentance? I have done so in those forms which I have been wont to use. But the act has seemed to me very hollow. Was it an act at all? Was I repenting? Was I confessing

my sins, or expecting that anything would come of the confession? And if I was, were those about me, children or servants, joining in the act? Was it any thing to them at all? Might not the Buddhist praying-machine have done just as well as these solemn words? These questions are very terrible!

Clergyman. They are indeed. Some of us know how terrible they are. The recollection has been present to me in much of this conversation. I have wished to shew you how little we can depend on our acts of repentance, what an utter mistake it must be to demand a certain effort of men before they receive the grace of God, if it be true, as your mother taught you and as all sound Churchmen teach, that the grace of God is the only source of any right effort of ours. Therefore I say we must call upon God who is our Father in Christ, to give us repentance, not come to buy His favour and make ourselves His children by repentance. Every penitent act, every conversion of the will, must proceed from the operation of His will upon us.

Layman. We come round to the old puzzle. How can I know that that operation will take place on my behalf? Because I pray for it? How do I pray without it?

Clergyman. These most necessary and reasonable demands of yours, shew you why I spoke to you of that mystery of the Trinity before I came

to that which you seem to think the simple act of repentance and prayer. I know that the act of repentance and the whole nature of prayer were to me hopeless riddles till this Name of the Father, the Son and the Spirit presented itself to me as the Name of Him in whom I was living and moving and having my being; till I believed that the Father had verily sent forth His Son to claim you and me and all men as His children, and was verily stirring our hearts by His Spirit that we might call Him "our Father." Then I understood that this prayer was not an act for moving His will, but was a response to His will; that I was resisting His will when I was not trusting Him with myself and with the whole universe, not desiring that He should break down the barriers of self-will and unbelief which keep us apart from our true condition as His reconciled and redeemed children, from our true fellowship with each other.

Layman. Redeemed and reconciled! The doctrine of the Atonement then is as necessary a condition to your idea of Prayer, even to the simplest practice of Prayer, as the doctrine of the Trinity.

Clergyman. If you had left out the word *doctrine* in both cases you would have expressed my meaning more nearly, and it would have been more intelligible to you. We are not baptized into the doctrine of the Trinity. It would be rather strange

language to say that your children hold the doctrine that you are their father. We are not reconciled to God by the doctrine of the Atonement. If your children had given themselves up to the dominion of some scoundrel and you brought them back to your house and forgave them their wanderings, they would not hold the doctrine that you were reconciled to them; they would accept the proofs you had given them that they were actually reconciled.

Layman. These illustrations may be good for children. They are somewhat worrying to men.

Clergyman. Not to men. To doctors they are worrying beyond all expression. Till they can reduce whatever is living, whatever is human, under the conditions of their logic, till they can turn it into a phrase, they cannot manage it. They had got the dead subject on the dissecting table; it was nearly ready for the museum; and, lo! it has started up; it glares at them with eyes; it grasps them with hands! Be sure you frame everything that men have believed in, hoped in, feared, loved, into a dogma; then it is safe.

Layman. That is to say, it will be good to dispute about for ever. Well! I am not going to break a lance for doctors of divinity. If you can dispense with them, so much the better for your comfort.

Clergyman. They have their function; perhaps it may prove some day to be a very useful function.

They may help plain men to avoid the tricks of words; not to be entangled in their own nets or the nets of dishonest word-dealers; to see into the mysteries of life and being which words are always seeking to express and cannot express. But I must repeat it; the family is the organon of Theology; the relations of fathers and children lead you into its deepest principles, which word-systems are always confining, stifling, killing. *God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them; therefore we beseech you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God.* This is St Paul's statement of the Atonement. You, kneeling as the priest of your family, thank God that by a sacrifice altogether wonderful—passing thought or belief—He has reconciled you and your children, being parts of His great human family, to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them. You bless God that He has redeemed you from the worship of false and cruel gods which you would naturally serve, to the worship of Him the God of truth and love. You confess how little you and your family have believed in this Father, have remembered His reconciliation, have served him with your hearts and minds and bodies. You confess how you have revolted from Him, refusing to be ruled by His blessed Spirit of sacrifice, falling into slavery to the spirit of selfishness. You confess that so far as you have done this you

have been untrue and unloving to each other, unfaithful to those blessed relationships for which God has formed you. You ask for the sake of the Eternal Son in whom the Father is satisfied, in whom He can be satisfied with you, in spite of your wanderings, that He would by His Spirit convert you and bring you back. You do not ask Him for anything contrary to His will. You ask what you know is according to His will. You ask God to convert you, not because you are not His children but because you are His children, and because being such you ought to live as if you were.

Layman. I a priest in my own family! Who will ordain me?

Clergyman. You have received your ordination.

DIALOGUE IX.

DIALOGUE IX.

FATHERS IN GOD.

Layman. You are, I suppose, *ex officio*, a believer in the Apostolical succession of Bishops, and in the invalidity of all titles to the priesthood not derived from them. What could you mean then by saying that I had an Ordination, that I was a priest? Do you hold that doctrine about all Christians being Priests, which is so unpopular with the English Hierarchy? And if all *Christians* are so, I am afraid my credentials might still be disputed.

Clergyman. That idea of a Universal Priesthood to which you allude was very consolatory to some friends of mine whose memory I revere. They believed the proclamation of it to be the great instrument for delivering the Church from priestcraft and sectarianism, the one which would raise this age above the foregone ages. I never could feel the

force of their arguments, or enter into their hopes. They seemed to me to be beginning at the wrong end. If we think first of men's sacrifices and of men's worship, we shall always, I suspect, beget new forms of priestcraft; every country and city will generate sects and religions conformable to its outward circumstances and its special tendencies. The priests, it is boasted, are merely officers of the community. The officers will make themselves its tyrants; precisely in the Greek sense of that word. If they are not its tyrants, they will be its slaves. Such a state of things as this cannot be a reformation of the evils which prevail among us; it must be a development of all those evils. The age may be moving in this direction; I believe it is. But the direction will be a downward one, a movement towards the abyss, if there is not some power which will bind us to the ages that are past, which will connect all ages with the eternal Being.

Layman. That language may procure you pardon for some of your offences from our English Episcopalians.

Clergyman. If the English Episcopalian requires me to speak slightly of those to whose theory I take objections, I should refuse to purchase his favour at such a price. I have seen an earnest faith in these champions of the universal priesthood which I should rejoice to possess, and which I found

more helpful to me than a thousand correct theories would have been. I have seen among them a pure domestic life, which told me how they were raised above their theories, and how I might be delivered from mine.

Layman. The Anglican theory about the Apostolical succession does not then altogether satisfy you?

Clergyman. As a *theory* it is especially disagreeable to me, precisely because it hides a *fact* which I think it is well worth our while to dwell upon, and which has commended itself to the conscience of our English people—a conscience remarkably indifferent about theories, always eager to emancipate itself from them. We love the thought of *Succession*. It is linked to the deepest, truest convictions of our national mind. We have a continuous history. We are an hereditary people. We cannot be anything else. Our hereditary feelings may degenerate into the grossest exclusiveness, the most insolent pretension. They may take that form in one class as in another. When they do take that form, however, in any class, the hereditary feeling is destroying itself; the Gentleman is becoming extinct; the symbol of money is taking the place of the family symbol. On the other hand the family feeling, the hereditary feeling, the feeling of the Gentleman or the *Gens*, may be extended to all classes, may exalt the la-

bourer as much as the lord. Now, that there has been something answering to this hereditary succession in the Church, something which has linked its different periods together, something which has linked them together by means of an Order—assuming to be an Order for the whole community, a witness on behalf of the labourer as well as the lord—this I accept as a *fact*, this I acknowledge to be a blessing from God.

Layman. All Nag's-head difficulties having been of course removed by your clerical argumentations?

Clergyman. I have often wished in my heart that there were fifty more Nag's-head difficulties which no clerical argumentations could get over. So little do I believe that the meaning of a Succession is affected by these interruptions. Judging from experience, from reason, from the analogy of Scripture one would say that such interruptions might be admirable instruments, in God's Providence, to prevent the feeling of Succession from becoming a chain upon our necks; precious witnesses against the Atheism so prevalent in all times of the Church, which uses one part or another of God's order as an excuse for denying the presence of God Himself.

Layman. You think your Anglican divines are not exempt from that atheism?

Clergyman. I think the English habit of mind to which I have referred, and which is in itself most

worthy to be cherished, makes us peculiarly liable to the assaults of this atheism. The main blessing of the Puritan revolution was that it broke through this horrible conservative unbelief, and declared God to be actually ruling in His own universe.

Layman. Episcopalianism then simply as against Presbyterianism, has no special charm for you. You like it chiefly for its connection with peculiarities of our English character?

Clergyman. *Episcopalianism*, it seems to me, has no affinity with our English character, or with the character of any people under Heaven; it belongs to the schools and the newspapers. *Fathers in God* I believe address themselves very directly to the hearts of Englishmen; not however because they are English, but because they are sons and fathers.

Layman. The loss of that name, the vehement denunciation of it in Scotland, appears to you then a great calamity?

Clergyman. I count it no calamity at all for Scotland that she rejected Episcopacy in the days of Laud. The Bishops who were introduced by the royal decree, would not have been Fathers in God, could not have been accepted in that character. They would have been simply prelates, as the Scotch called them. The Covenant which denounced Prelacy bore witness for a Divine government and authority which the school-prelatists like Laud were

setting at nought by their theories, which the regal prelatists like Charles were setting at nought by the glorification of their arbitrary power. I believe that the sense of the authority and obligations of the actual father, which mingled with all the stern individual Calvinism of the Scotch, and which produced those effects whereof "The Cotter's Saturday Night" bears witness, would not have come forth with such vigour if Prelacy had established itself. The heart of the people, the godliness of the people, would have been crushed under a dominion which they did not understand, which they could not associate with any thing Divine. If you ask me whether I think Scotland *now* exhibits the effects of the want of a fatherly government—I should say, certainly, I do see *that* in all its modern theology, in all that mongrel metaphysical religion which has superseded the genuine political Calvinism.

Layman. You would not object then if some Laud or Charles in this day were to put on them the yoke which their fathers were unable to bear?

Clergyman. I should object to it much more now than ever. I should be delighted to see the people of Scotland throwing off a yoke, not putting one on. The yoke of a mere system of divinity is I believe becoming intolerable to them. I do hope to see them bursting the fetters of their logic and their metaphysics, and once more learning that theology

of the Bible which has to do with the family in Heaven and the family in earth. Then they may discover in God's good time that all the Orders of the Church represent some relations of this family, that the Church can never be a universal one till they do. But I cannot expect them to arrive at this discovery till we, who have these names and boast of them, arrive at it. As long as the Bishop is for us a mere Prelate or the embodiment of an episcopalian theory—as long as his title Father in God is merely a technical title to which no one attaches any significance—so long Presbyterians had better hold their own and make what they can of it.

Layman. The Dissenters are wont to complain that these Fathers in God connect you with the corrupt Latin and Greek Churches, nay, that the great abuse and tyranny of Romanism has arisen from that title of Father.

Clergyman. I agree with them in both points. I think the Fathers in God do connect us with the Latin and Greek Churches; in which Churches there is a vast amount of corruption. I think that the mischief and tyranny of Romanism are connected with its use of the word Father.

Layman. You do not wish to make your ties to the Latin and Greek Churches less close?

Clergyman. No, I wish to make them much closer.

Layman. Yet you would not protest less vehemently against the Papacy?

Clergyman. I would protest much more vehemently if I could. But I believe God's protest now, as in the 16th century, will be considerably better and more effectual than ours.

Layman. You expect the downfall of the temporal power of the Popedom, and that you suppose must lead to its extinction as a spiritual power?

Clergyman. *What* is coming none of us may be able accurately to foresee. Our most exact calculations may be utterly set at nought. That there is even now at work that which threatens outward establishments and inward belief,—hierarchies, nations, households, all confess; some with trembling and yet levity, some with awe and yet hope. But though many of the signs of the times point very clearly to a shaking of the fabric of the Papacy, there are others which show how little Protestants are contented with Protestantism, how much some of them in England, but not only in England, are craving for treasures which they suppose the Reformation cast away.

Layman. Unfortunately for your argument, they are coveting the very treasures which are most incompatible with domestic life—sisterhoods, and clerical celibacy.

Clergyman. The vehement resistance to those

cravings in England, where the arguments in their favour which are deduced from the necessities of our population, seem particularly strong, is a proof—

Layman. Of our mammon-worship, of our love of ease and comfort,—so a majority of Romanists, and of Englishmen also, will tell us.

Clergyman. God knows how much mammonism, how much love of ease and comfort, mingles with these protests, and with every other which we raise. But it is a shallow and very mischievous mistake to attribute to mammonism and self-indulgence every conviction which adopts them into its service, and which is polluted by them. The English love of hearths and homes is our one barrier *against* mammonism and self-indulgence. The Englishman, in lifting his voice against sisterhoods and clerical celibacy, *believes*, at all events, that he is a witness for family sanctities, a denouncer of that refined mammonism—the ground and support of the coarse mammonism—which tries to buy the future world by giving up the present. If we would make an Englishman more true, we must do justice to the truth that is in him. Those who plead for sisterhoods or clerical celibacy must show him that they are not indifferent to home relations; that they are not carrying on a godless merchandise under the name of serving God.

Layman. But Sacrifice, you have admitted, lies at the ground of Christian life and devotion?

Clergyman. I *have* admitted it; and I would say further, that when Protestants cry out against the coldness of their own worship, the barrenness of their own lives, what they miss most in both is the principle and fact of Sacrifice. The trappings and shows of the Mass have in general little attraction for Northern natures, or only for those who have determined, by a violent effort, to make themselves Southern. The Mass *itself*, as the representation of an actual Sacrifice, carries, I believe, a message to thousands of hearts, to Northerners quite as much as to Southern. They feel as if there was something set forth in it which ought to bind them in one—to overcome all diversities of habits, all barriers of place and time.

Layman. I feel, when I am present at the Mass, as if I were looking at the picture—it may be a work of art, it may be a daub—of a mighty act which has been done, or has been supposed to be done, upon our earth. The picture has at times interested me, has even overpowered me. More commonly I hate it, because it is not real.

Clergyman. You express very nearly the feelings with which the Mass as well as the whole Romish System of which it is the symbol, inspires me. I find the picture of something which has been done for me and for the human race—of something

which is infinitely desirable and necessary for me and the human race. I look at it; I admire it; I detest it because it is a picture and because the semblance keeps the substance from *me*, offers itself to the *world* in change for the substance. The earthly fatherhood in Rome is the centre of this semblance. Our French Doctrinaires fear to see it melt away, lest nothing should be found behind it, and so all society should fall to pieces for want of a centre. I believe that the Eternal Father will be found behind it; that He will come forth to scatter the phantoms which have mimicked His divine order; that the one Sacrifice will be no more thought of as a picture but as a fact completed once, living ever, for the universe; that the brotherhoods and sisterhoods of the Convents will stand or fall just so far as they confess or deny the actual brotherhood and sisterhood which God has established to be their foundation, just so far as they reverence or do not reverence the original as greater and more sacred than their copy, just so far as they labour or do not labour to make families holy and united.

Layman. You are sketching out a second Reformation for other lands. There are some who suppose that we are far too much isolated from them; that we should be better for more sympathy with them; that we also want a Reformation; that it must proceed in the opposite direction to that which

took place in the sixteenth century, binding rather than dividing the Nations. With some of these opinions you have expressed a partial concurrence.

Clergyman. Not partial, but entire—so far as these wishes point to our need of a Reformation, and of one which shall connect us more closely with those peoples of the continent whom we have regarded, and who have regarded us, as religious enemies. What I hold is that we—Priests, Laymen, all of us—require to be converted from the worship of Mammon to the worship of a Father, and that when we are converted, we may be God's instruments in converting our brethren of other lands not *from*, but *to*, the faith which they confess with their lips, that especially which is indicated in their highest act of worship. I would however make one remark which I believe is of importance, that we may not separate ourselves from our own fathers in our desire for fellowship with those who have counted them and us heretics and apostates. Though the *effect* of this Reformation may be different from the former one, its *principle* I am convinced will be essentially the same. *That* Reformation began with the denunciation of an act of consummate, frightful Mammon worship,—an act which showed whither the whole Church was tending, by what spirit it was possessed, how all apprehension of the true nature of forgiveness,

of the purpose of Christ's Sacrifice, of the necessities of human beings, had been lost in the notion that men could traffic with an almighty enemy to avert the punishment which their evil acts had deserved. *Our* Reformation, I believe, must proceed in the same line, must thoroughly extirpate the remnants of this accursed doctrine, which is still working in the veins of all Christendom. So only will it raise the Mass and the other parts of Catholic worship and Catholic practice from death to life; so only will it regenerate Protestant belief; so only will it be the means of making the divided Nations a human Family.

Layman. Some of your Anglican Divines say that if your Bishops could be exempted from the dominion of the Bishop in Rome, who has no right to exalt himself above any other, they might fraternize with the Bishops of France, Spain, Italy, who have often been restive under his assumptions. But when they turn to Protestant Germany, Switzerland, Scotland, they say, "These can have no part or lot with us, for they have no Bishops."

Clergyman. Such language shows, it seems to me, what need we have to be converted from our theories and our pride to the belief of a Father in Heaven and an acknowledgment of His Government over men. If Bishops are Fathers in God, they are witnesses for the Fatherhood of God. The Pope's

usurpation is not offensive because it is a restraint upon *them*, but because it hides *Him* from His children: because it breaks the fellowship of Heaven and Earth. I would rather be an Ultramontane than a stickler for the authority of acephalous Bishops, each claiming a right to lord it over God's heritage upon his own maxims and in his own way. I believe the Papacy, with all its abominations, did often preserve laymen and clergymen from this irresponsible tyranny; did keep up the sense of a paternal authority. It exposed its own pretensions to *be* that authority or to be a substitute for that authority as no reformers could expose it. One point of this exposure—this self-confutation—was reached by Leo X. Then a poor monk, the son of a miner, was able in God's name to denounce his authority as a counterfeit one, the Vicar of Christ as one who denied Christ and separated Him from men. Our Anglicans say that Luther and the successors of Luther, Calvin and the successors of Calvin, have no Bishops. True! but they are fathers of families. The relation which is expressed in the episcopal relation—disjoined from which it becomes a fiction—does exist among them. We have therefore a bond of fellowship—of spiritual fellowship—with them which no difference of ecclesiastical institutions can destroy or even weaken. If we do not assert that fellowship, the ecclesiastical institution will

become a mere institution ; hard and formal, powerless for good, realizing itself in dominion, not in sacrifice, dividing us into a sect of Episcopalians, not helping to maintain us as a Church of Sons of God.

Layman. I see you are coming back to your text. Fathers of Families, as such are, in some sense, you suppose Priests.

Clergyman. Why do you say in *some* sense? In the highest sense. They have received their appointment and ordination directly from God ; they hold their office of Him.

Layman. But the Priest you admitted must offer a Sacrifice. There is no significance in his name unless he does.

Clergyman. Are you not offering sacrifices continually?

Layman. Of what kind?

Clergyman. Human Sacrifices. Sacrifices of yourself, of your children ; of all you have and they have.

Layman. You are perverting the sense of the word.

Clergyman. No, I am refusing to pervert it. I am using it in its highest New Testament sense, in the sense in which it is *not* artificial ; in the sense which explains all its other senses, real or artificial. I say you must offer Sacrifice to some

God; to the Father or to Mammon. I say your position as a father is the sign of your consecration to offer sacrifices—whole burnt sacrifices—to the Father and not to Mammon.

Layman. How do you connect this signification of Sacrifice with that which you say gives an attraction to the Mass in spite of the many scandals which it presents to our eyes?

Clergyman. There I see a figure of the transcendent human Sacrifice, the perfect oblation of the Son to the Father, that act of entire trust and obedience, which is the protest against hireling sacrifices, sacrifices to win some advantage, sacrifices presented to Mammon and not to God. There I see how the Father unveils Himself to His children; how He wins back and redeems His children; how He would mould His children into conformity with His own nature. All this is set forth to me in a *figure* by that Sacrifice of the Mass. I wonder not that men escaping from the sight of the selfishness which has overspread the Church and the world should fall in love with the figure. But, as you said, we want the reality. You and I have to do battle with selfishness not in a figure, but in the most intense concentrated power. It is assaulting our own hearts. It is assaulting our children. It is seeking to make us and them its victims now and for ever. We must have some armour against it

which is not imaginary. When you as a father kneel with your children before the Father of all, who has made the perfect Sacrifice for them and mankind, who has reconciled you and mankind to Himself—you seek this armour. You surrender your children and yourself as living sacrifices to Him who has the will and the power to keep them from the Minotaur that every moment demands them as dead sacrifices due to him.

Layman. Romanists have the help of a thousand saints and of the Virgin in their battle. All fathers, mothers, simple children; all prostitutes, purchasers in the lottery, brigands, may resort to these. Only the Sacrifice to the supreme God is reserved for the priest.

Clergyman. All of us may have the help of a thousand saints and of the Virgin in our battle; of our fathers and mothers, who have gone before us; of all the good men and women we have ever known and read of. Each of us may remember some dearer than the rest who allured him to right, drew him from wrong, when they were visibly present with him; and who, as they did not derive their might from what was visible to us, may be exerting it just as much and more effectually now that they are invisible. Prostitutes, purchasers in the lottery, and brigands may have no doubt experienced the aid of these unseen friends in delivering them from their foulness,

their gambling, their murders. Living faces have frowned upon them, invisible hands have held them back. Whilst we regard all these as ministers of the eternal Father, as witnesses of His love in reconciling the world to Himself, who can estimate the strength they may afford us, strength not to the imagination, but to that in us which most hates everything that is fantastic, everything that is not true! But if we invoke their presence, because we deem them more gracious, more loving than the eternal Father, because we suppose they may make our peace with Him, what then? The brigand will ask the saints or his especial saint to keep him from punishment, and to let him be a brigand still. The purchaser in the lottery will ask the object of his devotion to tell him the prize tickets, and to let him sink deeper and deeper in the abyss into which he has plunged. Let every father who would save his children from the perils to which he knows they are exposed, believe that he has a direct access to the highest throne of all. Let him believe that he may present before the Father that sacrifice by which He has purchased men from the tyrants to whom they have sold, and are now continually selling, themselves.

Layman. You use language as if it were real, which I have always accepted as purely metaphorical. Who that hears or reads a form of Family Prayers ever thinks of Sacrifice? The phrase 'Family Altar'

no doubt is suffered to remain, but only because it is felt to be without signification.

Clergyman. You speak truly. What a lesson to us lies in your words!

DIALOGUE X.

DIALOGUE X.

HEATHEN AND CHRISTIAN DEVOTION.

Layman. You seem to think that the world has become another world since the Sacrifice of Christ; that by it Heathen Sacrifices were abolished; that by it a new and diviner form of Sacrifice was established. I confess that there are few Heathen books of any worth or character which do not impart to me a greater impression that the writers actually believed in divinities related to themselves, divinities affecting their daily business, divinities to whom they might turn as *some* relief from the pressure of mortal confusions and disquietudes, divinities who might exercise some control over their moral lives, than those prayers which are composed in this 19th century for Families which worship God in the name of Christ. I open Homer. Everywhere I find Gods inspiring men with courage for the fight, Gods whom they may invoke as their friends and their fathers' friends,

Gods at the same time who know better what they want than they know. I find the Sacrifice used to attest the obligations of men to each other, really felt as a power which must not be trifled with. I open any Greek Tragedian. There is a web of destiny going through human life. There are human wills struggling against destiny, and yet controlled by it. But throughout there is a sense of actual mysterious powers, assertors of right, punishers of wrong, before whom men must veil their faces, who will certainly make them know some day that their deeds have not been done in secret. I go down to a later age, among those who fall within the Christian period, but who did not partake of Christian influences, some of whom resolutely opposed them. I read Plutarch. Everywhere I find the sense and confession of a power that must not be approached with dark rites, that must not be conceived of in any sense as evil, a protector and helper, to whom the thoughts of the heart are open, the remembrance of whom elevates the man above his animal tendencies. I turn to Epictetus. The poor slave knows that he is a freeman, for the things about him are not his masters. He can despise them. He can turn to the unseen and find deliverance. I pass to the Emperor Marcus Aurelius. There is in him that reverence for human relationships which you covet, and would seem to vindicate as Christian. But there is also the acknowledgment

of a directly divine oversight over all that he thinks and does and speaks, of a power which he must fear always, but before which he must not tremble, good, gracious, enduring, one who humbles him for his faults as well as raises him, one to whom he may commit his Roman subjects as well as himself. Yet this man was a persecutor of the Christian faith. And the results of that faith as I see them exhibited in our popular manuals of devotion, the results of centuries of Christian experience, are a cold, formal acknowledgment of a Being who is invoked sometimes as a Creator, sometimes as a Father, neither word seeming to possess any great significance, who is asked to do certain things for us which we all suppose will be done though we do not ask for them, and certain other things which we suppose will not be done, though we do ask for them. This is called Family Prayer, because father, mother, children, servants, kneel on their knees for a few weary minutes before breakfast and bed to repeat it; and Christian Prayer, because we say at the end of it, For Christ's sake, Amen.

Clergyman. I acknowledge the truth of all that you say. There are other facts as terrible, to which we have alluded already, and which we, in this 19th century of the Christian era, must not refuse to look steadily in the face.

Layman. You mean that actual condition of

English families which is revealed by those who investigate the dwellings of our towns; you mean that condition which is revealed by the trials in the Divorce Court; you mean that which is laid bare by modern French novels.

Clergyman. On that last subject I should not wish to speak, because every nation should know first its own bitterness before it presumes to judge of its neighbours. But the subject in one aspect has been directly connected with the religion of France by Michelet's celebrated book, "The Priest, the Woman, and the Family."

Layman. Michelet states the evil to be this; that the French husband is assumed to be necessarily a free-thinker, that the French wife is assumed to be necessarily a *dévôte*. He would cure this part of the evil (for he does not meddle with that other intruder into the circle, the adulterous lover, or he confounds him with the priest, insinuating charges which I utterly disbelieve) by admitting the wife into full sympathy with the advanced opinions of her spouse, and so destroying the occupation of the spiritual adviser. That is a remedy which you would certainly not sanction.

Clergyman. So far as it points to the most entire and unreserved communication by the husband of all his own thoughts and convictions—so far as it denounces the notion that a faith is wanted for the

woman which is not wanted for the man—so far as it declares that any priest who acts upon that notion must be a mischief-maker—I approve it thoroughly. Whether what is called free-thinking in France and in England, can emancipate the mind and conscience of either man or woman, or can be a bond of union between them, is a question about which I might perhaps find myself at issue with some laymen of both lands. From the interest which you express in the thoughts of Plutarch, of Epictetus, of Marcus Aurelius, to say nothing of the poets of an earlier time, I am convinced I should not differ about it with you. These teachers were as little like our modern free-thinkers as any that one can imagine. It was to Faith that they turned as the deliverance from bondage, not to unbelief. If Marcus Aurelius persecuted the Christians, it was because he supposed their thoughts about the Gods were too free. He was afraid the devotion of Rome, which was weak enough, would be made weaker if their doctrine gained currency.

Layman. I do not plead for unbelief as a blessing; I only submit to it as a dire necessity. Whilst Christianity is what those prayers I have spoken of indicate it to be, I cannot think that it is so good as the belief of the Emperor of Rome who tried to extinguish it.

Clergyman. Tried and failed. Do you think

that you could reproduce his state of mind in our time?

Layman. I suppose we have left it seventeen centuries behind us.

Clergyman. I do not think so. I believe all that is good and pure in that faith of his, in the faith of Epictetus, in the faith of Plutarch, may be restored and may drive out the infidelity which is the great contradiction of it, if we have really a message from the God whom they sought after and in whom they trusted, not to a few philosophers, but to human beings, to men and women and children. The announcement of such a message was too mighty for the imperial power of Marcus Aurelius, too mighty for his philosophy. The message threw down the Roman Empire, established a Christendom. If it is true, it does not depend upon the thoughts which men entertain about it in one part of Christendom or another. It may go forth again to restore the nations by restoring the families of the nations. There are many devices for restoring nations by statesmanship or by revolutions, by making Protestants or making Romanists or making free-thinkers. None of them go to *this* point. I love Marcus Aurelius as you do. But he wrote his Meditations, died, and left Commodus behind him. Gibbon begins the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," from the era of its great philosophical monarch.

Layman. Make the best you can of the argument that the fishermen of Galilee, proclaiming One who was called a carpenter's son, were able to establish their faith upon the ruins of that which Marcus tried to uphold. It is for *this* age we have to provide. Evidences about the past will avail little.

Clergyman. Very little. Nor is the argument itself of any worth, except as it shews that the fishermen of Galilee did *not* succeed in establishing any faith of *theirs*. If they had only announced a teacher whom they had followed, who could be made out to be a much better teacher than any previous one, their doctrine must be obsolete now; it must have been obsolete centuries ago: no Christendom could have come out of it.

Layman. An Islamism did come six centuries after out of the proclamation of Mahomet.

Clergyman. Because it was the proclamation of the one God, of whom Mahomet was the prophet. Therein lay its power. Whatever Mahomet was good for or not good for, he was good for this; he proclaimed a living God in whom men were not believing. And that God made it clear that He did live, that He was a Person, not a name in a book. But Mahomet said that He was *not* the Father of men in a well-beloved Son, that there was *not* an eternal Son who took upon Him the nature of man

and died the death of men. That which Mahomet denied, was the proclamation of the Christian Gospel. *That* was stronger than the Roman Empire. *That* created a Christendom. *That* is not obsolete. *That* is confirmed by all the abominations which we see around us, abominations which no mortal wit or wisdom can sweep away. *That* will still regenerate Christendom, and will raise those nations which have been crushed under Islamite tyranny and Islamite polygamy. *That* will yet appeal to all the deepest cravings in the countries which are under the yoke of Polytheism.

Layman. You think, then, that the dreariness of our family prayers arises from the unbelief of English Christians in the fundamental principle of Christianity?

Clergyman. It comes, I think, from the cause which I assigned in one of our conversations. We have glorified ourselves on our Christianity. We have put our Christianity in place of Christ our King. We have not therefore believed His testimony concerning His Father. We have not supposed that when He said, "I ascend to my Father and your Father," He intended us to take the words as true.

Layman. I have often read these words in the Sermon on the Mount with great amazement, "*Your Father knoweth the things that ye have need of before*

you ask Him." If that is so, I have said to myself, why do we pray? I cannot help suspecting that that same doubt is in the minds of those who compile our books of family devotion. It seems as if asking with them was very much a ceremony. They believe it has somehow a strange influence on the divine Mind; they believe it has a good influence on their own. But they hover between the two convictions; they do not like to put either too strongly. So they leave an impression upon us of an insincerity which I am sure cannot really have had possession of them. For certainly some of them, probably all of them, have been good and devout men.

Clergyman. You are right. The insincerity in those who give expression to it, who make it palpable, is probably less than in most of us. They are fighting with it, trying to throw it off. These forms of prayer are efforts to throw it off. The writers of them wish to seek help against it, wish to teach us how we may seek help against it. But the habits and confusions of their time are too strong for them. I can sympathize with them. I have tried again and again for years past to find some language which should not involve me and others in it; I have again and again been baffled. If I should ever be permitted to do it, God will have taught me the lesson through sheer despair. But

no language, on the whole, has been so helpful to me as that which you have quoted from the Sermon on the Mount. You will remember that it is the introduction to our Lord's form of prayer.

Layman. I know it. When I last read the passage, I paused and asked myself why that was so. And, strangely enough—I am a fool to confess it—I found myself praying for an answer.

Clergyman. What a lesson you learnt about the nature of prayer then! What a fool I must be to try and explain it to you. Your Father knew what you had need of before you asked Him. You felt that He did; therefore you had courage to ask Him. He spoke to you; that gave you encouragement and power to speak to Him.

Layman. Something of the kind happened to me then, and has happened to me at other times. It seemed very wonderful. I had often mocked at the language of the Quakers about movements of the Spirit. At that moment, or at least in considering afterwards what I felt in those moments, I was sure that they were right.

Clergyman. You have retained that conviction?

Layman. No; it has departed like many others. I am afraid of yielding to emotions and impressions. One must work and fight on as well as one can. Those movements, if they were genuine, are not likely to come again.

Clergyman. I think they are coming continually.

Layman. Are you a Quaker?

Clergyman. Yes, if one must be a Quaker to believe that we know not what we should pray for, but that the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, and maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered.

Layman. I suppose that text would be the great bulwark of their faith. But it appears to me to make regular morning and evening prayers a contradiction and an impossibility.

Clergyman. I should say so likewise, if I believed only in spiritual *influences*. But I believe in a Spirit from whom those influences proceed. I believe that He is the Spirit who has adopted, and does adopt, men into God's family, enabling them to say *Our Father*. If I worshipped angels who come down into waters and trouble them from time to time, I might wait, and urge others to wait, for the influences which those angels are able to impart. If I confess an Eternal Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son, I must suppose that He is at all times moving upon the waters to make them pregnant.

Layman. You are continually involving me in that orthodox confession of the Trinity from which I have fled to Quakers, Unitarians—all kinds of strange

people—because its demands on the Reason were so terrible, the penalties with which it was fenced so outrageous. The one Father of the Unitarian, the one Spirit of the Quaker—each accepting in his different way a Christ, each holding on, if sometimes with a feeble grasp, to the Bible—have by turns offered me an escape from this crushing dogmatism. I have found both unsatisfactory enough on further acquaintance—bridges over the abyss which every unusual torrent carries away. But I think I can relapse into either rather than be bound again in the meshes of your system.

Clergyman. You must be bound in the meshes of no system, if you would pray to God in spirit and in truth. Or, rather, prayer to God will help to break the meshes as no human skill can. Instead of robbing you of your Unitarian refuge, or of your Quaker refuge, I wish you to feel the worth of both. The Unitarian told you of a Father without a Spirit, the Quaker told you of a Spirit without a Father. Do not believe either against the other. You have found that you cannot. Each bridge, as you say, has broken down. Each of the sects has cried out for help to the other. Each is screaming now, "Give us of your oil, for our lamps are going out." And meantime the voice of the great Bridegroom of humanity is heard in the stillness of the night, saying, "I descended from thy Father to

“bestow this Spirit upon men. Come forth one and all to meet me now, that you may claim your places as children of my Father, and may bring forth the fruits of His Spirit.” There is the escape from the cold, hard, orthodox system of which with good excuse you complain. If this awful and wonderful Name into which we are baptized, instead of being a living Name in which we live and move, is turned into an intellectual notion, we become Atheists indeed. If the light becomes darkness, how great is that darkness!

Layman. But you have accepted a Creed which says that without doubt those shall perish everlastingly who do not believe in this doctrine.

Clergyman. By accepting that Creed I have clearly and solemnly avouched two things. 1. That I do *not* hold the name of the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost to be a doctrine, but to be the Eternal Godhead—(as the Fathers and schoolmen expressed it), the Infinite Charity. 2. That I do *not* hold eternity to be a state in time, but a state which can only be understood in relation to Him who is and was and is to come. To dwell in Him is eternal life; to be separated from Him is eternal death. We may be right or wrong in retaining the Athanasian Creed among our formulas, but so long as it is retained, so long I must contend that I cannot, without a violation of its letter and of its spirit, regard the

Trinity as a dogma (which I should account blasphemy whether I had this Creed or not), and that I cannot give eternal death the meaning of suffering for endless ages (which I should hold to be inconsistent with the awful lessons respecting Eternal Life and Eternal Death in the New Testament, whether I held this Creed or not). I make these remarks because I would not willingly evade any objections which may occur to you against me; not that I am anxious to force the consideration of this ancient canticle upon you.

Layman. We have certainly wandered a long way.

Clergyman. Not a step out of our road, I think. Why are our modern forms of prayer cold and contradictory? that was the question. We have agreed about the fact. I said that prayer has no meaning apart from sacrifice; that sacrifice is not real if it is not filial sacrifice; that the perfect sacrifice was the sacrifice of Him whom we call our Lord, to His Father. If He is not really a Son; if His Father is not really a Father; if the Unitarian One God, or the Quaker Spirit expresses the complete idea of Godhead; if that Godhead is reduced into a notion or opinion, which is the continual temptation of the orthodox: the filial sacrifice is gone; it cannot be the foundation of our sacrifices; therefore it cannot be the foundation of our prayers. We may ask in

Christ's name or for Christ's sake, but we do not believe that we are children offering ourselves in Him to a Father, accepted for His sake. We do not believe that the Father knows what we have need of before we ask, and *therefore* that we may ask.

Layman. For what?

Clergyman. These words tell me what. *If ye being evil know how to give good gifts to your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?* If I must wait for certain gracious influences before I pray, if He who is called the Father in heaven has no Spirit to give, or I cannot receive it, those words would mean nothing to me. But what might is in them for one who is tormented by evil spirits to think and do all evil things, and who learns that His heavenly Father, because He is not less gracious than earthly fathers, will not refuse him the only help which can be of any avail to him?

Layman. You limit your petitions then to spiritual blessings?

Clergyman. The plowman needs the spiritual blessings of industry, vigour, watchfulness, that he may do his jobs in seed-time and harvest. The student needs the spiritual blessings of discernment, capacity to admire, skill to weigh evidence, fidelity not to pervert or misrepresent facts, freedom from dread of opinion, and the vanity of distinguish-

ing himself. The physician needs the spiritual blessings of resolute investigation, reverence for life, sympathy with suffering, courage to rise above mere sentiment, and a thousand others which I can hardly dream of. So that if I did, as you say, confine myself to spiritual blessings, the list would be long enough; the applications will be various and practical enough.

Layman. You are extending the meaning of the word spiritual beyond its customary dimensions.

Clergyman. What are its customary dimensions?

Layman. It means something that has to do with the next world and not this, with religion and not with, with, with—

Clergyman. You seem at a loss for an expression. I will supply it. With the necessities moral and physical of the creatures, whose nature Christ took and for whom He died. When He promised to His disciples a Comforter who should guide them into all truth, and bring all things to their remembrance, I do not think He gave His words those "customary dimensions." Certainly the Apostles did not so understand Him. All powers, faculties, energies of the human spirit they supposed were awakened by the Divine Spirit. All its powers, faculties, energies were to be yielded to His guidance.

Layman. But why ask for that which has already been given?

Clergyman. Reflect upon that question yourself. A gift which is to kindle life, which is only effectual when it stirs the man within us,—can I hold that as I would hold a purse of gold? Can I say of that, “It is mine; I have it”? Must not the very condition of the possession be that I do not say that? Must I not be receiving that I may ask, and asking that I may receive? Of course this is a paradox, an absurd hopeless paradox, to a man whose analogies are all derived from tangible material possessions—from things to be maintained against an adverse claimant. They are profoundly reasonable to the man whose analogies are drawn from the intercourse of human life; from the reciprocation of affection between a husband and wife, a father and a child. The most precious gifts of relationship and of friendship are such as only belong to the receiver, so far as he recognises the source from which they come; so far as he is continually asking for the renewal of them.

Layman. That is a sentiment which would not have been wholly unintelligible to Marcus Aurelius.

Clergyman. Certainly not; his gratitude for the gifts which he received from his mother and his different teachers, gifts which were precisely of this character, is one of the most striking and memorable traits in his life.

Layman. Whence could it come?

Clergyman. I who believe in a Son of God,

from whose fulness all graces have been derived—in a Spirit of God who has alone imparted any apprehensions and promptings of goodness to men—can have no doubt whence it came.

Layman. But Marcus Aurelius did not believe in the one God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Clergyman. If *I* believe that this is the God who was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be—I must refer his acts and thoughts to this source; whether he did or not.

Layman. Your confession of the necessity and efficacy of Christ's sacrifice does not hinder you from holding that opinion?

Clergyman. I should not hold it if I did not confess the necessity and efficacy of Christ's sacrifice. I could not feel myself bound to men of all generations, past, present, and to come, if I did not believe in the sacrifice of the eternal Son of God, foreordained before the foundation of the world, but manifested to us that we might proclaim it to the universe.

Layman. Then you would not object to the idea which seems to have floated continually before the heathen Emperor, if it did not actually possess him, that his whole life was to be a service of the divine guide, a kind of continual prayer?

Clergyman. I think, as I said before, every act

of our lives must be an act of surrender and sacrifice to some being or other—a submission to the guidance of a righteous power or of an unrighteous one.

Layman. The morning and evening prayer in the family would not be a substitute for this kind of service. *Laborare est orare* might still be our maxim?

Clergyman. *Still* our maxim! My wish is that it should *become* our maxim. The morning or evening prayer, if it were an acknowledgment that the Father of all had united us to Himself in his Son, and had accepted His perfect sacrifice for us; had invited us all to offer ourselves as living sacrifices to Him; if it were an united oblation to Him; if it were a cry for the Holy Spirit to fit the whole family and each member of the family for the tasks and duties God had appointed;—must be the great preparation for that labour which is true, honest, and faithful, because it is itself prayer.

Layman. And you think that there are prayers which even I might join in; nay, which I might offer for my household?

Clergyman. Let us speak of that point when we meet next.



DIALOGUE XI.



DIALOGUE XI.

THE METHOD OF PRAYER.

Layman. When I first spoke to you about family worship, I had a dim, half-formed notion that you might suggest to me some ingenious compromise with my conscience—some universal prayer in which Jew, Turk, Pagan, and Infidel might join. I confess I had heard many suggestions of the kind from others, had made many attempts myself, and that the results were not satisfactory. The terms could never be quite sufficiently vague. They tended continually to the formula, “O God, if there be a God, save my soul, if I have a soul;” and whatever faith may be embodied in that petition, it is not a faith which seems to demand a very definite expression, or which one cares to propagate even in one’s home-circle.

Clergyman. I think there *is* faith embodied in that prayer as well as in the one which Bp. Atterbury

quoted as a rebuke to the layman who spoke of it at some dinner-table, "O God, I am going to be very busy to-day. If I forget Thee, do not Thou forget me." Believing that we have a Father, every feeling after Him by every man must seem to me sacred and significant. Whether the man thinks he has a soul or not, the dream that it is possible for him to look up to a Being above himself who may save him, is proof of something much *more* than that he has a soul; it is a proof that he *is* a spirit. That spirit cannot conceive a God, cannot make a God. It cries to Him if He is, to reveal Himself—to reveal Himself by saving that spirit from its darkness, ignorance, degradation. My conviction is, that He has heard that prayer and the other. He has not forgotten us, though in the midst of our business or our idleness we have forgotten Him.

Layman. Your notion, however, of a universal prayer is not of an invocation to a "Jehovah, Jove, or Lord"?

Clergyman. I own I do not want a Jewish religion *plus* a heathen religion *plus* a Christian religion. Nor do I want, by eliminating what is peculiar in each of these faiths, to bring forth an *Être Suprême* who does nothing, thinks nothing, is nothing; who merely represents what is *not* true in the different systems, that which has been the source of their

idolatry—the notion that God is created by His creatures. I do need that the “Father of all, in every age, in every clime adored,” should make it manifest why He has been so adored; should show us whether He is a Father or no; whether He is a Father of a herd of animals who are without wills, who have no power to do right or do wrong, or of a family of spirits whom He has made in His own image. Accepting the revelation in Christ as the revelation of His Son, I find that need satisfied. Therefore I deem our Lord’s prayer more universal than Pope’s prayer.

Layman. If you would stop at our Lord’s prayer, Unitarians would not complain. Even Deists would not complain, since Christ’s own Name is not introduced into it. But you have insisted on the mysteries of the Trinity and of the Atonement as implied in the very nature of prayer, as demanding in some manner or other an expression in our prayers. To reconcile these demands with the “After this manner pray ye” of the Sermon on the Mount, appears to me difficult.

Clergyman. You remember how our conversations began?

Layman. You mean with my statement of the perplexity which I felt about my mother’s consistency in teaching me the Lord’s Prayer, while she regarded me merely as a child of Adam?

Clergyman. Precisely. My endeavour has been to show you that she did not regard you merely as a child of Adam, however an imperfect theory which struggled with her deeper convictions—her inward faith—may have led her sometimes to say so; that she had a right to teach you the Lord's Prayer; that she did teach it you in sincerity and truth.

Layman. You suppose that her belief in Christ as the Son of God and as the sacrifice for men, was her justification for making me repeat that form of words as I knelt by her.

Clergyman. I am sure she would not have taught them you if she had felt them to be only a form of words. I am satisfied she never said "*Our Father*" herself without thinking of you as well as of herself. She did not expect you as a child to know the reason which warranted any one in using that awful name. As in all other cases, the fact is announced first. Our after discipline and education is to bring forth the interpretation of the fact, and by that interpretation to increase, not lessen, its awe and wonder.

Layman. A strange view of things certainly to a person whose mind has been running, as mine has, in the groove of modern speculations. I fancied that Christian mysteries belonged to the period of infancy, that they still clung about the hearts of women, that he who puts on the manly gown casts

them off—except from deference to custom and tradition, from a tenderness to that which was once believed, or from a dark apprehension that a mere void of nothingness may lie below. You appear to suppose that it is manhood more than childhood, manhood even more than womanhood, which craves these mysteries as a rock and resting-place; that all the conflicts of unbelief are driving us not from them but to them; that we need them lest civilization should return to brutality; that we need them lest in place of a more universal fellowship, we should be split into smaller sects and parties; lest at last every one should be for himself, and no God for us all!

Clergyman. You have expressed truly my hopes and my fears. It is under the pressure of such hopes and such fears that one learns to pray, that our prayers become not solitary prayers, but family prayers, universal prayers; and yet that each one really in his prayer attains a sense of his personal life and his personal obligations which he never could realize while his only cry was, "Save my soul if I have a soul."

Layman. And you still think that our Lord's form is the best form, that after this manner we are to pray in manhood as in childhood, with our own family and with the human family?

Clergyman. I can discover no other method but that. I cannot complain, as some do, of our being continually reminded of the form of words itself.

The recurrence of it in our Church prayers does not grate on my ears, but recalls me to the sense of what all prayer is. Still we know too well that it may become a mere charm. We do not pray after this manner if we suppose that certain blessings or indulgences follow from a repetition of the sounds. Each petition ought to be realized in its own power and significance. Then I believe it will be a manual indeed, like no other in the world; an education of our spirits respecting our highest and most ordinary necessities; a wonderful illumination respecting the Eternal and the Temporal, and their necessary union; a discovery of the common blessings which all men have need of; a deliverance from the selfishness and superstition which lead men in pursuit of separate and dividing objects; a perpetual admonition that our Father in heaven knows better what we want than we know ourselves, and that prayer is reasonable, blessed, necessary, because He does.

Layman. Your object then would be to construct your family prayers upon this model?

Clergyman. I dislike the word *construct*. I believe we may ask God Himself to teach us how to work, to speak, to think; it cannot be strange that I should suppose He may teach us how to pray. The sudden extemporaneous gushes of a human spirit, if they are indeed gushes, may carry great power with them because there may be great truth in them,

because they may spring from a deep ground, and may not express only what the speaker feels and needs, but what the man in him feels and needs; therefore may find a response in you or me or any man. But the most meditated prayers, those in which the man considers what he needs as a man, and seeks to be delivered from the cravings which separate him from his fellow-men, these surely may import as much of divine teaching, as real an inspiration.

Layman. Inspiration!

Clergyman. Yes; I must use the word. I am certain I cannot talk of prayers as your mother would have talked of them, I cannot mean by them what she would have meant by them, if I do not use it. The coldness and deadness which you complain of in our family worship would not exist if the person who wrote the prayers and who utters the prayers had not been afraid to say, "I cannot think, I cannot pray, I can do nothing which a man ought to do without an inspiration." It is not vanity to think that God will inspire me when I am praying, when I am working, when I am studying. It is the root of all vanity to suppose I can be anything or do anything if He leaves me to myself!

Layman. People will tremble for the Scriptures and their inspiration if you use this language.

Clergyman. Let them tremble. It is well that

they should tremble at their own unreal thoughts about the Bible and about themselves. They never will understand Apostles and Prophets, they never will reverence Apostles and Prophets, they never will believe Apostles and Prophets, till they confess that the Holy Ghost who spoke by them has not forsaken us, that we are baptized into His Name, that we are able to perceive anything, hope for anything, love anything, only because He works with us and in us.

Layman. Will not that opinion bring back the notion of gifts of tongues, with all the other dreams that upset the mind of a man so honest and true as Edward Irving? *

Clergyman. No: it is the one deliverance from these dangers. It is that which alone can prevent their continual recurrence at any period when men awake out of the torpor of a customary belief, and begin to think that the words spoken in Scripture are not spoken in a double sense but are words of truth. If the presence of the Holy Spirit is not confessed to have been denoted once by the sign of the gift of tongues that men might recognise His presence always, in all exercises of thought, in all communications with each other—specially and as the ground of all other exercises, in communion with God Himself—there will be a continual craving for a repetition of the signs, a desire for sensible phenomena,

which will destroy spiritual order and spiritual life under the pretence of vindicating them. What a lesson is contained in Irving's submission of his judgment and conscience to the interruption of some woman, to the decree of some self-exalted man, when he had such a lofty sense of his own calling as a minister of God! If the Spirit is not recognized as the Spirit of order, the Author of family order, the Quickener and Inspirer of all steady, orderly, harmonious acts, He will be confounded with the spirits of confusion and disorder, even by those who like Irving are smitten with the most vehement passion for ecclesiastical organization, and would sacrifice almost anything for the sake of that.

Layman. Your boast of inspiration, then?...

Clergyman. Boast of inspiration! Boast of weakness of will, incapacity of judgment, poverty of thought!

Layman. Well, then, your belief that God inspires those who are weak of will, incapable of judgment, poor in thought, does not hinder you from adhering to a certain method?

Clergyman. It makes me feel the blessing and necessity of a method, the terrible bondage of "chance desires," the imperfection of "unchartered freedom."

Layman. To go back, then, to the point from which we deviated, you suppose that family

prayers might be cast in the mould of the Lord's Prayer?

Clergyman. I always lament that I have not made more use of its different clauses as guides to my own thoughts; if I had, I should have found my days linked much more closely to each other; my devotion would have been less barren, my family sympathies much more alive.

Layman. I am not sure that I understand you.

Clergyman. You may suppose that we have talked enough of the first words, *Our Father which art in Heaven*—those upon which all the others turn. And yet if we tried—say on each Sunday—to reflect, what would happen if some one came to us, according to the vision of Richter, saying, “These words are a lie; you have no Father”? and if we all believed what he said; we might press more directly home upon ourselves these questions, “*Are they a lie? Am I prepared once for all to say that they are—to act on the hypothesis? If not, are they true? What follows if they are? What can I do that they may not be a lie to me, to my family, to all mankind? Who can hinder me and my family and all mankind from coming into that condition in which they shall be the mere repetition of sounds, which are for us utterly dead? Who shall hinder the dissolution of all human ties which will ensue then? Who can*

“hinder the dissolution of human ties which is approaching *now*? Shall I ask the State, the Press, the Hangman, to give me aid, or shall I ask this Father who is in heaven?”

Layman. Are those Sabbath musings?

Clergyman. None drive me so much to seek for Rest where rest may be found—rest for me and my family and the universe.

Layman. Will *Hallowed be thy Name* help us for the week-day work of the world?

Clergyman. I can tell you what need I experience every week-day for help of the kind it might afford me, if I cannot exhibit any signs of the good I have gained from it. Some false name of God, some dark superstition concerning Him, is every day and hour striving to take the place of the Father in my mind, striving to banish His image from it. The confusions I see in the world, the death I see in the world, suggest some of these names to me. My own practice, my own injustice to my children, my want of affection and sincerity to my neighbours, canonize many more. And so I make gods after the standard of the appearances of things and of my acts, and the standard which might enable me to judge of those appearances rightly, and to reform my acts, disappears. I cannot keep the Name which Christ has revealed to me distinct from other counterfeit names; therefore I am forced to ask God that

He will keep it apart; that He will hallow His own Name.

Layman. By Name you understand attributes?

Clergyman. His *Name*, as I find it used in the devotions of the Bible—as I use it in my own—saves me from the inversion, misery, and profaneness of “attributing” my conceptions to Him who alone gives me the power of conceiving. Oh! if one could get a learned Oxford logician to think of his own name—of that Sir-name which his fathers bore, of the Christian name which denotes him as a distinct person—that name which he received when the water of baptism was poured on him—if he would think that this is a nearer road to God than he can find through Aldrich or Whately or Mill—what a difference it might make to him and to us, to our human life and our human studies as well as to our theology!

Layman. Can I pass from “*Thy kingdom come,*” to the reading of the *Times* newspaper?

Clergyman. I know no preparation for that reading which will avail us except that prayer, as I know no commentary on that prayer so wonderful and so awful as that reading. “People tell me, Father of all, that Thou hadst a kingdom once in this world; that Thou didst deliver the Israelites out of bondage and reign over them. Other people tell me that that

is all a delusion; that Thou hadst no kingdom then, only a certain Semitic people fancied that Thou hadst. Is that so? Or dost Thou reign now? Hast Thou a kingdom over these Frenchmen, these Italians, these Americans of the North and South, these Turks, Greeks, Russians? Have they succeeded in establishing their Popes, Emperors, Presidents in place of Thee? Hast thou no kingdom over these streets of ours, over these boys that we are training for prisons, over these girls that we are nursing into harlots? If Thou hast not, how is it that the universe holds together; that there is any law, any freedom, any national life, any relations of father and son, of husband and wife, of brother and sister? If Thou hast, O arise! Let not us have the upper hand. Let us not boast that we are the authors of the life and civilization which by our pride and selfishness we are destroying. For the comfortless troubles' sake of the needy, for the deep sighing of the poor, for the deliverance of the rich from the evils which they bring upon themselves, let thy kingdom come!" Could such a prayer be more real to any man in the fourth or sixth or tenth centuries than to us whose principal studies are in the *Times* newspaper?

Layman. I have a difficulty in distinguishing this petition from the one which follows it. Do you feel as if that awakened in you a distinct train of

thoughts, and as if those thoughts had to do with our time?

Clergyman. I do not deny that it is impossible to separate the idea of a kingdom of God over men from a kingdom over the wills and spirits of men. It is the very distinction of the kingdom of heaven as we considered it before, that its dominion does extend into the region whence all the forces that act upon material and outward things proceed. But if you remember the questions by which men have been tormented respecting Will and Necessity, if you reflect that these questions, though they have given rise to so many bewilderments of school-logic, nevertheless exist in the heart of every man, and come forth in the strange doubts and questionings of every child; if your own experience tells you how they disturb resolution and impede action, how still "I dare not waits upon I would" in the feeble man, how the strong man, as he throws off that feebleness and says "I will," becomes often the murderer and the tyrant; is it nothing in every stage of our lives, from infancy to old age, to be able to say, "*Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven*"? What mountains of false prayer and sacrifice, of dark superstition, and of cumbrous reasoning, are thrown down by those childlike words!

Layman. The next always puzzles me. Does

not God give us our daily bread without our asking? And does He give us more because we ask?

Clergyman. No; perhaps less. If I ask for the sufficient bread, the bread day by day, I ask that I may not have that fulness of bread, that rank superfluity which destroys my life, which makes me unfit to do my work as a man, disinclined to be a man. Again, the *Times* newspaper comes in with the divinity of its facts, if not of its leading articles. I read of millionaires, of swindlers, of starving operatives; I feel there is something utterly wrong in society as I see it. I find that no agrarian laws, no revolutions for equality, have set things right. Yet I see that agrarian experiments and revolutions for equality must be and will be the effect of this state of things; nay that great overthrows of a fictitious civilization have been the means by which men have been taught that they cannot make laws their own way, that there are laws which bind them and to which they must submit. I do not know what I can do that society may move in a more reasonable and right course. I am sure that I and every one ought to do something. But what we do, often—so the oracle of *The Times* tells us—aggravates the evil; we work against the laws of the universe instead of with them. That I may do what I am meant to do for myself and others, that I may go with

the laws of the Universe and not against them; that I may not have bread without toiling for it, and that I may encourage others to toil for it; I am driven to pray, *Father, give us all day by day our daily bread.*

Layman. What a terrific sentence is contained in the next clause! How it seems to contradict everything that you have said about all the good that is in us having its origin in the unconditional love and grace of God! *Forgive us our trespasses, AS we forgive them that trespass against us.* We are to earn God's forgiveness by our forgiveness. Our forgiveness is to be the measure of His. The language makes me shudder, even while I confess a certain retributive justice in it!

Clergyman. It would make me shudder, and I should not have your sense of its retributive justice if I were not praying to a Father in heaven, if I had not begun by learning what His Name is, His Kingdom, His Will. Believing that the Son of God, the express Image of the Father prayed to that Father for the men who were committing the greatest crime that was ever committed upon earth, "Forgive them;" believing that His Kingdom is the Kingdom of forgiveness, the Kingdom which has always been at war with the unforgiving spirit in the hearts of men; believing that when He ascended on high He sent forth His Spirit to preach

forgiveness to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem ; believing that He knew what the Will of His Father was, and that He did His Will ; I cannot doubt that all the forgiveness which is in me or in any man, proceeds from the forgiveness of our Father in heaven. And when I ask Him to forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us, I confess to Him that I have in me, that we have in all of us, an inclination *not* to forgive, a disposition to take vengeance upon each other for the wrongs we have received or fancy we have received from each other. And feeling this in myself, and knowing how incapable it makes me of apprehending His free, full, immeasurable forgiveness, how it forces me to think of Him as like myself, to confuse my darkness with His light, therefore I ask Him according to His great promise, to send His Spirit of forgiveness into all hearts ; so that the forgiveness which we receive from Him may be a real and perpetual spring of forgiveness in us. The law is,—we know it and experience it,—that we can only receive His forgiveness vitally and effectually as we forgive others. The reason is, that He forgives us one and all for Christ's sake ; that it is a universal forgiveness, and that each must recognise it as such if he would enter into it for himself.

Layman. Does our Father in very deed *lead us into temptation*? Is it only by asking Him *not* to

lead us that we escape the mischiefs which He Himself would cause us?

Clergyman. I know for myself that I am tempted every hour by every event which befalls me, by sudden occurrences, by daily routine, by prosperity and adversity, by friendships and enmities, by solitude and society, to do wrong acts, to think base thoughts, to fall into evil states of mind. Am I led into these circumstances by a foe? Has the devil created the universe in which I dwell? Has he ordered all things that shall conduce most to my ruin? It is my temptation, it is yours to think so. I have no way out of it but by crying, "Father, I believe that all these arrangements of my life are Thine. I believe that none of the evil which arises out of them is Thine. Thou art leading me into the circumstances. Lead me not into the temptation which the circumstances of themselves acting on my evil disposition would cause me! But hold me up, hold us all up continually by Thy hand, and *deliver us from the evil!*"

Layman. If you separate that prayer from the last, you come back, if I reckon rightly, to Sunday again. The week is completed.

Clergyman. I do not much care whether I join it with the prayer against temptation, or contemplate it by itself. It is a famous prayer to end a week with. It is a famous prayer to begin a week with.

It points to the work of God; it points to the rest of God. It points to the work of man; it points to the rest of man. The work of the Father of all, if Christ's revelation is true, His highest and most glorious work, has been to fight with evil, and to deliver out of it those of His creatures who having wills and being therefore capable of evil, have fallen into evil, and who by that fall have made all the involuntary creation other than it ought to be. The rest of God was in looking upon His creation as He formed it, and lo! it was very good! His highest rest is in looking upon His Son, the First-born of many brethren, the Head of all Creation, the Redeemer of it from its misery and death. Man has been called to the work of fighting with evil, of fighting with it from first to last in the name of God and His goodness. Man has been called to the rest of believing in God's Righteousness, His order, His Truth in the midst of unrighteousness, disorder, untruth. Men since the Incarnation and Ascension of Christ have been called to a more tremendous conflict with evil in its high places, evil assuming the very nature and character of God, boasting that it is God. Men since the Incarnation and Ascension of Christ have been called to a higher rest in the assurance that God has prevailed over evil in their nature, that they are admitted to enter into communion with Him through the finished Sacrifice. There remains still a Sabbath-

keeping for God and Man ; that full revelation of the sons of God of which St Paul speaks, which shall be the redemption of the whole travailing creation from its burden and bondage, the complete answer to the prayer, *Deliver us from evil.*

DIALOGUE XII.

DIALOGUE XII.

THE SOUL AND THE SPIRIT.

Layman. In our conversations we have ascended into the heights of theology and gone down into very common domestic matters. But that which is the main topic of modern divinity—that question which I have been told should take precedence of every other—“How can I save my soul?” you have scarcely brought before me at all. When I mentioned an infidel prayer which appeared to involve it, you treated even that as indicating some truer belief, some deeper necessity, than this familiar phrase expresses. Are you not departing from the lessons of Scripture when you take this course?

Clergyman. The word Soul occurs so seldom in the New Testament, that I scarcely know to which passage you would direct me. Would it be this? “He that saveth his soul ($\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$) shall lose it: but he that loseth his soul for my sake shall find it. For

what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? and what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He cometh in the glory of His Father and the holy angels. Or would it be that in which St Paul speaks of the soullish man (ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος) as not knowing the things of the kingdom of heaven, because they are foolishness unto him?

Layman. A part of the first quotation is the favourite text of those who urge their hearers before all things to save their souls.

Clergyman. Yes; but the first part and the last are left out; without which the middle must, in our Lord's sense of it, be unintelligible. Dare we treat any words except His in that fashion?

Layman. How would you read those words?

Clergyman. I can only take them as they stand. I suppose them to be an exhortation to lose our souls for Christ's sake; an intimation that we shall gain nothing by losing them and getting the world in change for them; an assurance that He will be ashamed of us when He comes in His Father's glory, if we have preferred our souls to Him.

Layman. Why not put "life" for soul, as our translators do?

Clergyman. If you please; but then it must be life in both places. And then there will be actually

no passage upon which to rest the exhortations which form, as you say, the substance of our modern sermons.

Layman. Not the words of the jailor at Philippi, "What must I do to be saved?"

Clergyman. Unless St Luke has repeated those words and the whole story incorrectly, the jailor asked nothing about his soul. According to the simple statement of the divine historian, he was in terror from the earthquake and from the fear that the prisoners would escape. He started up, seized a light, fell down before the men whose feet he had put in the stocks and who had been heard singing praises to God, saying, "What must I do to be saved?" He doubtless fancied that they did know of some power which might save him from the powers, visible and invisible, that seemed ready to crush him. St Paul had come to Macedonia to tell men of One who had delivered *him* from his horror of divine vengeance and from the notion that He wished to take vengeance upon the Gentiles. He had no doubt that his Lord and Saviour was the Lord and Saviour of that man. He said, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*

Layman. Does he say, *and thy house?*

Clergyman. Turn to the chapter and see.

Layman. That is certainly strange. But yet it seems to me that St Paul did speak, or intend to

speak, to the soul or something—call it what you will—in the man, which he supposed Christ had come to save, and which could understand what he meant when he told him so.

Clergyman. There I entirely agree with you. He spoke to the man himself; to the man in the man. He said to him, not “Thy soul shall be saved,” or “Thou shalt hear of a way in which thy soul may be saved,” but, *Thou* shalt be saved, and not only thou, but thy family.

Layman. But does not this come to the same thing in the end?

Clergyman. It comes to what your mother and all true people have meant by saving their souls. They believed in One whom they could not see, and so rose above the worship of the things they did see. They believed in a Being who cared for them, and so rose above the terrors of invisible powers that might destroy them. They saved their souls by losing them; for what is faith or trust but losing one’s self in the object of faith or trust? But is this the impression which our words about saving the soul have conveyed to you? Have you felt that we were bidding you trust in a Father, that you might not be enslaved to fears of the visible or the invisible? Have you felt that what was spoken to the individual man who was overcome by anguish of conscience or by dread of future punishment was spoken

to him as a father, as one of a household, that his salvation was also theirs?

Layman. Certainly your most effective popular sermons and tracts on the text, "What shall I do to be saved?" have not suggested those thoughts to my mind. As I said before, the earnestness of clergymen to save the souls of the wife and daughters of a household is a powerfully disturbing influence in a household. And though those who are brought under this influence commonly engage in various benevolent acts, it strikes me that in some most practical senses of the word they become self-seekers.

Clergyman. Many instances might be cited in confutation of your opinion; very many in which a temporary self-seeking has given place to maternal, filial, and sisterly devotion of the noblest kind. But that there is this danger; that those who escape from it speak bitterly—often too bitterly—of the religious teaching which has led them into it; that they are often drawn away from it with sudden violence, and that the wrench not seldom proves fatal to their divinest convictions as well as to their reverence for parents and teachers who deserve their reverence; this cannot be denied by any one who observes the condition of English families.

Layman. And yet this uprooting of family affections is a less terrible spectacle to me than another. I know families which preserve the traditional lan-

guage of parents who spoke about the salvation of the soul and vital religion amidst great opposition; just because it is the popular language of the day; just because it gives them an excuse for denouncing infidels and high churchmen and all people but themselves; just because it permits them to indulge all forms of money-getting and money-spending, except a few, the abstinence from which constitutes their Christianity.

Clergyman. Well, if this be so, cannot you own that it may be our duty to abandon this kind of appeal to men, seeing, as I have shewn you, that it has no Scriptural warrant; even if there were no deeper reason, even if it did not hinder us from making another appeal, which I conceive *has* the highest warrants of Scripture and is specially needful for our time?

Layman. What appeal?

Clergyman. That which St Paul made to the jailor in that passage which has been the formal justification of the other method. Before him crouched a poor creature, a short time ago a tyrannical official, now a trembling slave. In that slave he saw a man, a man whose nature Christ had borne, for whom Christ had died. The manhood was dead and buried, but it might be raised from its death and grave. The voice of the Son of God could awaken the spirit out of that sleep. The jailor

could become what he was created and redeemed to be.

Layman. If he would believe in a certain doctrine?

Clergyman. Belief according to St Paul is the response of the spirit to the call of its divine Lord and Brother. The jailor might have performed a great many acts of worship and devotion on his own account, might have often neglected his prisoners for the sake of those acts, and treated them more cruelly afterwards. When he believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, he rose above himself; he had found One to which he could commit himself, One who cared for his prisoners as well as for him. It was not belief in a doctrine, it was belief in a Person; unless, as I said before, St Luke has misrepresented the whole narrative.

Layman. And that Person you suppose may be announced to every man as an object for his belief?

Clergyman. If St Paul had not thought that He might be announced as more than an object of every man's belief—as Himself the author of belief, as speaking to and in the heart of the most hardened—he would not have been in that prison, he would not have addressed those words to the keeper of it.

Layman. Belief, then, you do not regard as an act by which man procures salvation for himself?

Clergyman. I do not know what 'procuring

salvation' is. If I am sunk very low, I want to be lifted up. Belief or trust in one who can lift me up, and is at hand to lift me up, puts me on my legs, restores me to my reasonable position, makes a man of me. Every word in the New Testament presumes that a man is created to depend and to trust; that in dependence and trust is his life; that in self-satisfaction and distrust is his death. Every experience of human beings goes the same way. Armies are panic-stricken, because they have lost their trust, because each soldier has begun to think about himself and what is to become of him.

Layman. This belief, then, you do not look upon as something solitary. Your illustration of an army is badly chosen, is singularly inapplicable, if you do not suppose it to be a social principle.

Clergyman. Certainly. To care only for self; to think only of self; to live only in self; is not that the condition of a devil? Is not every approximation to that an approximation to the condition of a devil? Salvation out of that damnable state—that state which in its completeness is damnation—is what men are asking heaven and earth to give them. Any animal indulgence, drinking, gambling, has an attraction for a man because it rescues him from himself. He rushes into society, he becomes the slave of society, that he may escape from himself. He must escape somehow; he must give up his soul, this

perpetual torment, somehow. The message of the New Testament is the message *how* he may give it up, *where* he may dispose of it, by what means he may become one of a kind, personally and livingly attaching himself to the Head of his kind and so to the different members of it.

Layman. The idea of men as spiritual creatures, as somehow connected with a spiritual world, mingles strangely and confusedly with the secularism of our times; not really disturbing it or subverting it; but playing fantastically about it; supplying an evening's entertainment and wonderment to those who devote their days to the most material occupations.

Clergyman. You are right. The combination is very noticeable and profoundly instructive. There never was a time in which men found it more impossible to shake off the notion that they have something to do—much more than they once fancied—with spirits and spiritual influences; never a time when that notion seemed so little to connect itself with action, energy, moral purpose, resolution.

Layman. In such a conflict, secularism must win the day.

Clergyman. It has won the day so far as it demands a practical recognition of the superiority of tangible and material interests to all others. The spiritualists have nothing which they can oppose to that. It will not win the day against all kinds of

vague and incoherent superstitions, darkening and bewildering the heart and intellect, interfering with manly investigation and honest work. The spiritualist will keep the secularist supplied with these superstitions; he may half say to himself, "They do not mean anything; they are playthings of my fancy;" but he will not trust his own whispers. They will come forth, as of old, into ugly shapes. He has too much reverence for the material not to demand that they should be materialized.

Layman. What are you preachers of the Gospel doing to meet this state of things?

Clergyman. Some of us are arguing about the authenticity of the Scriptures; some are endeavouring to confute the doubts of geologists about the Mosaic history of creation; some are trying to show the secularists that there are so many probabilities in favour of the existence of a God that the denial of it is dangerous; some are earnestly conjuring men to save their souls.

Layman. You do not anticipate any great effect upon spiritualists or secularists from these reasonings and persuasions?

Clergyman. Not if the New Testament and its methods are true. Not if we have a right to believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. Not if He is the Father of Spirits to whom we owe a reverence like that, only more

complete than that which we owe to the fathers of our flesh.

Layman. How then?

Clergyman. Supposing these things to be true, supposing we do believe the New Testament and our Creed, and do confess a Father of our spirits, then I think we should preach *this* Gospel to secularists and spiritualists. We should tell them that there is a Father of their spirits, who is truly speaking to them, inviting them to trust Him, raising them above their animal natures, giving them power to do the work which those animal natures require of them, lifting them above their selfish tendencies, enabling them to live in society, to cooperate, to make sacrifices for each other, delivering them from vague superstitions, idle phantoms, frivolous imaginations about spirits, bringing them into a real fellowship with all spirits that live or have lived in this world, because into fellowship with *the* Spirit who inspired them, united them, taught them that they were sons of God, and therefore members one of another.

Layman. What hope have you that such words would be listened to, while others apparently much more level to the apprehensions of this age, less hostile to its opinions, are disregarded?

Clergyman. I might remind you of the famous consolation which Demosthenes addressed to his

countrymen: "Men of Athens, if you had been doing rightly and wisely and yet Philip had made all these conquests, I should despair of you. Because you have been doing nothing that is right or wise or suited to the occasion, therefore we may hope; for the remedy lies with ourselves." But I can offer a better comfort than that, or you would remind me that Philip did triumph at last. If we believe in God, the remedy does not lie in ourselves. We may ask Him to bring us into a right course, to give us repentance for a wrong one. We may have confidence that He will do His work with us or without us.

Layman. You think that secularists,—that men of science who are out of harmony with the Bible and its teaching and do not set much store by Paley,—that men of the most opposite kind to these, who have faith in spirit-rapping and table-turning, only not in any substance,—are likely to listen to a message about a Father while they can scarcely bring themselves to acknowledge an *Opifex Mundi*?

Clergyman. Secularists, men of science, spirit-rappers, have had fathers. Some of them have children. How deeply and dearly many of them feel these facts and cling to them, how they reverence their fathers and love their children, how much some of their most vehement protests against our teaching have come from this reverence and this love, I know

and rejoice to know; great as is the shame which the knowledge brings with it! Perhaps there is no book of our time which on the whole is so much at variance with all the convictions I have expressed in my conversations with you, which contemplates civilization in such a directly opposite way to that in which I contemplate it, as Mr Buckle's. And yet I must say words which it might have been right to suppress when they would possibly have given him pain: that his testimony respecting his mother, and the belief of immortality which he derived from the recollection of her, appears to me such a witness of the true principle and law of civilization, of the inseparable union between spiritual truths and family feelings, as outweighs all his statistics. That lesson I would prize and lay to heart. For the sake of it we should honour and love the writer, when all the hard things which he said about us and our convictions have been long forgotten.

Layman. I am sure he was right in that part of his belief, whatever else he may have been wrong in. The evidence of Immortality which I derive from the recollection of my mother stands me in stead when all the fine arguments of old philosophers and modern divines fade away like mist before me. And yet it is strange! If I thought of immortality as she thought of it, I should wish—how often have I wished!—that I could shake it off altogether. Immortality was, in

her creed, not the expansion of all the faculties of the soul, the casting off the slough of earthliness and corruption. It was connected with visions of an eternal life for the believer, of eternal misery for the unbeliever.

Clergyman. So is it in your creed. You can be as little content with a mere 'immortality of the soul' as she could be. You need an Eternal God as she did. For you are a spirit as she was. A selfish joy, if it was to last for ages upon ages, must be to you only another name for misery. You want a Father; you want a Family. Eternal blessedness is in fellowship with the Father and with His Family in heaven and earth. Eternal misery is in the separation from that Father and that Family.

Layman. And that misery you say is reserved for all unbelievers?

Clergyman. Into that misery I say my unbelief has brought me and does bring me. I carry about with me as you do, as every man does, an unbelief in the Father whom Christ revealed to us, a solitary self-seeking mind which cuts me off from His family. This is not a temporal misery; it can be measured by no minutes or hours. It is an eternal misery; it is the misery of a spirit; created for intercourse with Him who is and who was and is to come: created to share His Life, and choosing Death instead of Life.

Layman. But out of this eternal misery you suppose spirits may be raised?

Clergyman. If not, the Redemption of Christ seems to me a mockery. It is not *only* the Redemption of spirits from their death; it contains the promise of the redemption of the body from its death. But the first message of the Gospel, that which your mother embraced with such intense joy and thankfulness, is that spirits have been redeemed out of *their* death, *their* hell; not only out of temporal but out of eternal death.

Layman. I know not whether I quite understand you, but I do own that the sense of immortality which comes to me when I think of my mother is not merely a hope of the future but a recollection of the past, one strangely blended with the other, unfolding itself out of the other. I own that there does come with it the sense of a Being not far off from me in some distant cloud, but very near, to whom I can commit myself and my ways; who knows of me what I do not know of myself; who knows me altogether; who I desire should know know me altogether. I think He has been guiding me in strange paths. I think He must be guiding us all—guiding our wills—our spirits, as you would say. I suppose I do feel him to be a Father. I do ask Him, somehow, to lead me into the right road. I do tell Him, as I could not tell any man,

what wrong roads I have wandered into. And there is something in what you say about the Family. The sight of my children, the thought of what they are, and what they are to be—yes, my friend, I must hope that they have a better Father than I have ever been or ever can be to them.

Clergyman. *If we have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence, shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of Spirits, and live?* That is the moral of all the conversations we have had together. I thank you, from my heart, for all you have taught me of my own forgetfulness of it, of my infinite need to be reminded of it. Oh if I did not believe that the Revelation of a Father of Spirits in Christ, the Lord of our spirits, the Lord of angels and men, was a revelation to you, to every Secularist, to every Spiritualist, to every man of science who is tempted to dream of a world without a God, I should have no hope for myself. We have the signs and tokens of such a Father all around us, the earthly images of His Divine Nature. The earthly images and the heavenly Archetype will always sustain and illustrate each other. The family in earth will be best when it confesses the family in heaven. The family in heaven will be always drawing into itself, always investing with its light and glory, the families on earth. And then the Creator of heaven and earth, of all

things visible and invisible, will indeed be confessed with joy and transport by His children. There will be no hard attempts to accommodate texts to facts or facts to texts. The Mosaic record of Creation will be read again as it was read by us when we were children. We shall see the divine order, the order in which we are living, unfolding itself in the week of work and of rest, in the days and nights of work and of rest which God has given us. Creation will then be no hard mechanical contrivance, no subject for debates and controversies. There will be no fear of investigating any one corner of it, of searching into its depths or its heights, into the ages past or the ages to come. The tokens of a Father will be seen everywhere, the tokens of a Conqueror of death and the grave. And we shall be sure that that Father of Spirits who has brought even our spirits, reluctant as they are, to confess Him—who has forgiven the sins even of us the fathers of families, even of us the ministers of His Word,—will at last subdue all things to Himself, will make all creatures in heaven and earth and under the earth bow and obey Him—will testify in due time of the redemption which He has accomplished for all the families of the earth.

THE END.

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